

Ensign

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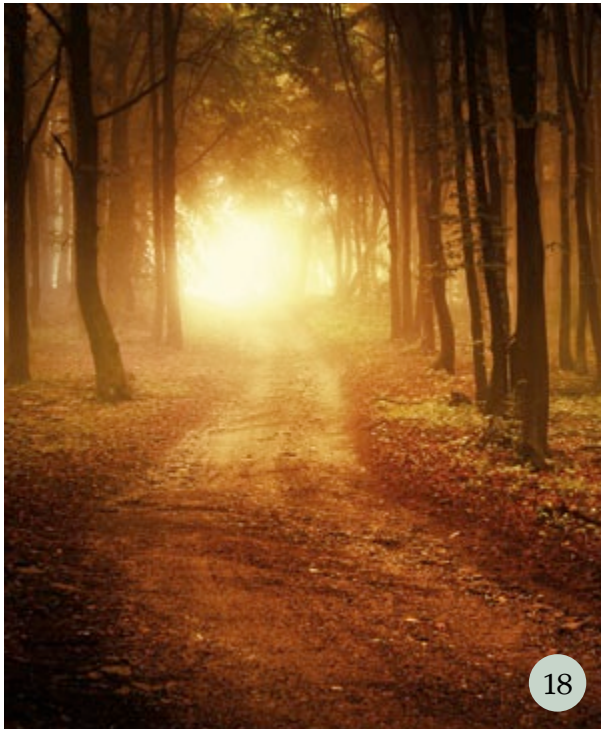


*“Motherhood is
not a hobby,
it is a calling. . . .
It is not something
to do if you
can squeeze
the time in.
It is what God
gave you time for.”*

Rachel Jankovic, in Neil L.
Andersen, “Children,” *Ensign*,
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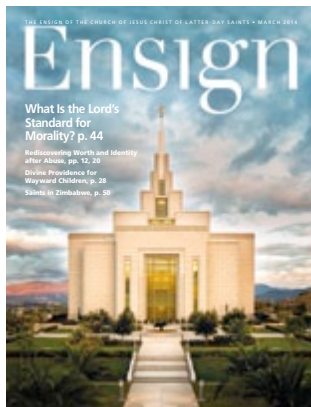
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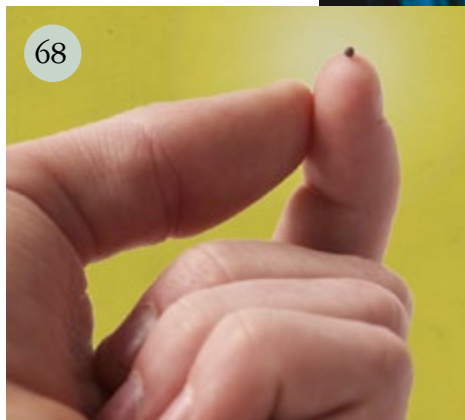
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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF
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March 2014 Volume 44 • Number 3

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Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening.
The following are some examples.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CODY BELL

“Inviting Success,” page 24: Choose
one of the stories from the article and read
it aloud during family home evening. Ask

family members to discuss
what led to the successful
missionary opportunity.
You could then go over
the 10 suggestions for
sharing the gospel listed
on page 27 and invite
family members to set
a goal to try one of the
suggestions by a certain
date. You could end
by watching a favorite
Mormon Messages or
Bible video and asking
family members to prayer-
fully consider a friend or
acquaintance with whom
they could share it.

**“Maintaining an
Eternal Perspective,”
page 56:** Consider read-
ing to your family Elder
Renlund’s statement,

“Anciently, prophets used tangible objects
to serve as reminders of God’s goodness
to help the people maintain a long-term

perspective.” Ask family
members to describe
any such objects they
can think of from the
scriptures. You could
share an example from
the article, such as
the stone the prophet
Samuel called Ebenezer
 (“the stone of help”).
Invite family members
to identify objects exist-
ing today that can help
them maintain an eternal
perspective (ideas might
include the temple, a
family photograph, or a
journal). Discuss the ways
in which the tangible
objects of the sacrament
(bread and water) help
us to remember the eter-
nal perspective.

IDEAS FROM PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Over the years, personal inter-
views with our children on fast
Sundays have been a natural
setting to generate topics for
family home evening. As a
result of ideas coming from
these interviews, our family has
studied together the standards
in *For the Strength of Youth*,
the nine principles for success-
ful families as outlined in “The
Family: A Proclamation to the
World,” and with the help of a
Presidents of the Church insti-
tute manual, the life and teach-
ings of each of the latter-day
prophets. These lessons have
greatly enriched and strength-
ened our family.

Brady Nixon, Utah, USA

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will be notified.



**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in the
First Presidency

Service

AND ETERNAL LIFE

The Savior is our example of unselfish service. His perfect life was devoted to serving Heavenly Father and all of His Father's children. The united purpose of the Father and the Son is to give all of us the gift of immortality and the blessing of eternal life (see Moses 1:39).

To qualify for eternal life, we must be changed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ—born again and cleansed from sin. Little children under the age of eight, however, are without sin and are redeemed through the Atonement (see Mosiah 3:16, 21; Moroni 8:10–12).

For all of us who reach the age of accountability, there is a wonderful plan that allows us to be cleansed from sin and prepared for eternal life. That preparation begins with baptism by priesthood authority and the reception of the Holy Ghost. Then we must always remember the Savior and keep the commandments He has given us.

King Benjamin told his people in the Book of Mormon of the joy that comes from feeling forgiveness from sin through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Then he taught them that to retain a remission of their sins, they must teach their children to serve one another and they must be as generous as they could to meet the temporal and spiritual needs of those around them. (See Mosiah 4:11–16.)

He also taught, “And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

Jesus went about teaching His gospel and doing good (see Acts 10:38). He healed the sick. He raised the dead. With His power He fed thousands when they were hungry and without food (see Matthew 14:14–21; John 6:2–13). After His Resurrection He gave food to several of His Apostles as they came ashore at the Sea of Galilee (see John 21:12–13). In the Americas, He healed the sick and blessed the children one by one (see 3 Nephi 17:7–9, 21).

James the Apostle taught us how the desire to serve others springs from our gratitude for what the Lord has done for us:

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. . . .

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:25, 27).

One of the assurances that you are being purified is an increasing desire to serve others for the Savior. Home teaching and visiting teaching become more of a joy and less of a chore. You find yourself volunteering more often in a local school or helping care for the poor in your community. Even though you may have little money to give to those who have less, you wish you had more so that you could give more (see Mosiah 4:24). You find yourself eager to serve your children and to show them how to serve others.



As your nature changes, you will feel a desire to give greater service without recognition. I know disciples of the Savior who have given great gifts of money and service with a determination that no one but God and their children would know about it. God has recognized their service by blessing them in this life, and He will bless them in the eternal life to come (see Matthew 6:1–4; 3 Nephi 13:1–4).

As you have kept the commandment to serve others (see Matthew 22:39), you have felt a change in your feelings of pride. The Savior corrected His Apostles when they contended about who would be greatest among them. He said:

“Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:10–11).

The Savior teaches us how we can learn to serve others. He served perfectly, and we must learn to serve as He learned—line upon line (see D&C 93:12–13). Through the service we give, we can become more like Him.

We will pray with all the energy of our hearts to love our enemies as He loves them (see Matthew 5:43–44; Moroni 7:48). Then we may at last become fitted for eternal life with Him and our Heavenly Father.

I promise that we can come to serve more perfectly as we follow the Savior’s teachings and example. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has encouraged us to pray for opportunities to serve: “In your morning prayer each new day, ask Heavenly Father to guide you to recognize an opportunity to serve one of His precious children. Then go throughout the day . . . looking for someone to help” (“Be Anxiously Engaged,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 31). Consider inviting those you teach to set a goal to pray each morning for opportunities to serve and then to seek them throughout the day.

An Answer to Her Prayer

By Siphilile Khumalo

One night a friend of another faith visited me. I usually study my scriptures alone, and I had taken them out to study that night. I was prompted to invite her to join my scripture study, but I was afraid and began instead to study alone. I knew that I had ignored a prompting of the Spirit. After a few minutes I cautiously asked, "Would you like to study the scriptures with me?" Without hesitation my friend replied, "Yes."

We then read from the Book of Mormon. She asked me some questions, and I could feel the Spirit guide me as I answered. I bore my testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. After I did this, she told me, "I have been crying and fearful all day. I had just prayed to God for help when you asked me to read the scriptures with you. I feel so much better now. Thank you."

The Lord had used me as an instrument to answer a prayer and serve one of His children in need. I know that promptings are divine instructions from a wise, glorious Father. When we put aside our fears, we allow Him to manifest His power through our obedience.

The author lives in Gauteng, South Africa.



Look for Ways to Serve

Children can choose to serve others. Circle the pictures where the child is choosing to follow Jesus Christ by helping someone else.



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the life and mission of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.



The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: Light of the World

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring aspects of the mission of the Savior.

As we come to understand that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, we will increase our faith in Him and become a light to others. Christ testified of His role as “the true light that lighteth every man [and woman] that cometh into the world” (D&C 93:2) and asked that we “hold up [His] light that it may shine unto the world” (3 Nephi 18:24).

Our prophets have also testified of the Light of Christ. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Each time you choose to try to live more like the Savior, you will have your testimony strengthened. You will come in time to know for yourself that He is the Light of the World. . . . You will reflect to others the Light of Christ in your life.”¹

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said of our being a light to the world: “We need to protect our families and be at the forefront together with all people



of goodwill in doing everything we can to preserve light, hope, and morality in our communities.”²

From the Scriptures

John 8:12; Doctrine and Covenants 50:24; 115:5

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “A Living Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 128.
2. Quentin L. Cook, “Let There Be Light!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 30.
3. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 163–64.
4. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 164.

Faith, Family, Relief

From Our History

Latter-day Saint women today continue to hold up their light.

On the 80th floor of a high-rise in Hong Kong, China, a single sister with physical disabilities—the only Latter-day Saint in her family—created a home that was a haven where she and visitors could feel the influence of the Spirit. She kept her scriptures, her Relief Society manuals, and her hymnbook nearby. She traveled to the temple to perform ordinances for her ancestors.³

In Brazil a righteous mother raised her children in the light of the gospel. Primary songs filled the air in her red brick home, and pictures from Church magazines of temples, prophets of God, and the Savior covered the walls. She and her husband sacrificed to be sealed in the temple so their children could be born in the covenant. Her constant prayer was that the Lord would help her bring up her children in the light, truth, and strength of the gospel.⁴

What Can I Do?

1. Discuss what it means to be a light to the world today.
2. Ponder how following the Light of Christ helps you endure trials.

OCTOBER 2013 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the October 2013 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



Prophetic Words on Marriage

“**M**arriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the Lord’s doctrine and crucial to God’s eternal plan. Marriage between a man and a woman is God’s pattern for a fulness of life on earth and in heaven. God’s marriage pattern cannot be abused, misunderstood, or misconstrued [see Matthew 19:4–6]. Not if you want true joy. God’s

marriage pattern protects the sacred power of procreation and the joy of true marital intimacy. We know that Adam and Eve were married by God before they ever experienced the joy of uniting as husband and wife.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Decisions for Eternity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 108.

Answers for You

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your November 2013 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- What can I do if a family member has strayed from the gospel? See Henry B. Eyring, “To My Grandchildren.”
- Is there a safe place to raise our children? See Boyd K. Packer, “The Key to Spiritual Protection.”
- Why is the influence of women important? See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women.”

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

DRAWING PARALLELS: GOD'S LOVE

Some of the most important topics are addressed by more than one general conference speaker. Here is what three speakers said about God's love for us:

- "Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. . . . It is simply there."¹—President Thomas S. Monson
- "[The Savior] is always near, especially in sacred places and in times of need; and sometimes, when I least expect, I feel almost like He taps me on the shoulder to let me know He loves me."²—Elder Terence M. Vinson of the Seventy
- "I bear witness that no one is a stranger to our Heavenly Father. There is no one whose soul is not precious to Him."³
—Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 123, 124.
2. Terence M. Vinson, "Drawing Closer to God," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 106.
3. Gérald Caussé, "Ye Are No More Strangers," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 51.



Prophetic Promise

"It's natural to have questions—the acorn of honest inquiry has often sprouted and matured into a great oak of understanding. There are few members of the Church who, at one time or another, have not wrestled with serious or sensitive questions. One of the purposes of the Church is to nurture and

cultivate the seed of faith—even in the sometimes sandy soil of doubt and uncertainty. Faith is to hope for things which are not seen but which are true [see Hebrews 11:1].

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters—my dear friends—please, first doubt your doubts before you doubt

WARD AND GENERAL MISSIONARY FUNDS

"I thank you for your generous contributions. The need for help is ongoing, that we might continue to assist those whose desire to serve is great but who do not, by themselves, have the means to do so."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 4–5.



your faith. We must never allow doubt to hold us prisoner and keep us from the divine love, peace, and gifts that come through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Come, Join with Us," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 23.

ABRAHAM

“As we follow Abraham’s example, . . . we will find greater happiness and peace and rest, [and] we will find favor with God and with man.”¹ —President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)

The marshland of Ur in Chaldea was my first home. The Chaldeans, including my father, worshipped idols and offered human sacrifices. But I believed in the one true and living God and prepared for the day when I could receive the priesthood, as my forefathers did.²

One day the Chaldeans bound me as a sacrifice on the altar of the god Elkenah. As they were about to kill me, I prayed to God for deliverance and my bonds were loosed immediately. Then the Lord spoke to me: “I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee, and to take thee away . . . into a strange land.”³

The Lord began to bless me immensely: I received the priesthood

through Melchizedek,⁴ and the Lord covenanted with me that I would become the father of many nations and that the gospel would bless all humanity through my posterity. He changed my name from Abram to Abraham, meaning “father of a multitude.”⁵

I brought my family to Canaan, the land the Lord had prepared for us.⁶ The Lord promised me that His covenant regarding my posterity would be fulfilled through a son born by my wife Sarah. Sarah and I had been unable to have children. We wondered how we could have children when we were both so old—I was 100 and Sarah was 90.⁷ But as the Lord promised, we did have a son, Isaac.⁸

Some years later, there came one of the hardest trials of my life. Even though I had witnessed the pain of human sacrifice, the Lord asked me to offer my son Isaac as a sacrifice. My heart grieved, but I trusted the Lord. When I was about to slay Isaac, an angel called to me, saying, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, . . . for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld . . . thine only son.”⁹ The Lord provided a ram to be sacrificed in Isaac’s place, which Isaac and I then offered to the Lord.¹⁰

Because of my obedience, the Lord reaffirmed His covenant: “I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”¹¹ ■

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Example of Abraham,” *Ensign*, June 1975, 7.
2. See Abraham 1:1–8.
3. See Abraham 1:12, 15–16.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:14.
5. See Genesis 17:1–9; Abraham 2:8–11; Bible Dictionary, “Abraham.”
6. See Abraham 2:4, 18–19.
7. See Genesis 17:15–21.
8. See Genesis 21:1–3.
9. Genesis 22:12.
10. See Genesis 22:1–13.
11. Genesis 22:17–18.



SEXUAL PURITY

Parents sometimes feel unsure when opportunities arise for them to teach their children about sexual purity. However, discussions on this topic can invite the Spirit and help prepare children to make and keep sacred covenants.

On pages 28–29 of this month’s *New Era*, Neill F. Marriott, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency, writes, “Heavenly Father provided the powers of procreation within marriage for godly purposes only.” We learn from *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* that those purposes include “expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife” ([2010], 21.4.4). The suggestions below can help you teach your children about sexual purity. You can also refer to “Teaching Chastity and Virtue” in the October 2012 *Ensign* for more ideas on how to approach this topic.

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Consider reading with your teenage children “We Believe in Being Chaste” by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the May 2013 *Ensign*. Invite them to ask questions about sexual purity. You could also use “Personal Purity”

by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the February 2000 *New Era* to help answer their questions.

- The youth curriculum topic for Sunday lessons this month is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Consider using the curriculum materials to teach your youth about the repentance required for sexual sins (see lds.org/youth/learn). You could also read and discuss “Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?” by Elder C. Scott Grow of the Seventy in the October 2013 *New Era*.
- If a temple is nearby, consider visiting the temple grounds with your family and discussing why we must remain pure to enter the temple. You could share with them the blessings you have received from temple worship. You may also want to plan a time for your family to do baptisms for the dead.
- You may want to read with your youth “Sexual Purity” in *For the Strength of Youth* ([booklet, 2011], 35–37) and highlight the blessings we receive for staying pure. You could encourage your children



SCRIPTURES ON THIS TOPIC

Psalm 24:3–4
 Matthew 5:27–28
 1 Corinthians 6:18–20
 Jacob 2:27–28
 Alma 38:12
 Doctrine and Covenants 46:33;
 121:45

to write down goals related to sexual purity.

Suggestions for Teaching Children

- You may want to hold a family home evening in which you use pictures of temples to discuss the importance and sacredness of the temple. Then you could explain that our bodies are sacred temples too.
- Read with your children the thirteenth article of faith and talk about the importance of keeping our thoughts clean. Make a list of some books, movies, and songs that will fill your mind with good things. You may want to read, watch, or sing them together. ■

THE BURDEN WAS REMOVED

Name withheld

After being abused as a child, I struggled for years before deciding to tell someone about it.

Recently I sat in a Relief Society lesson where a sister read a quotation regarding the effects of physical and sexual abuse on children. My first thought was, “How sad.” Then I was filled with the Spirit, who bore witness to me of the miracle of the Savior’s Atonement. I had been a victim of sexual abuse at a young age. During that Relief Society lesson, I realized that I no longer felt pain and fear attached to something that had consumed and frightened me for years. It was a miracle. In my heart I thanked the Savior for healing me.

As a child I struggled and felt shame for years before deciding to tell someone that I had been abused. When I was 13, I felt an impression that it was time to talk about it. After a service activity at Mutual, I went to a trusted leader, who spoke with me tenderly and took me to see the bishop the same evening. I was relieved by the bishop’s warm countenance as he invited me into his

office. I remember feeling the weight of years of secrets lift as my bishop listened. I recall his pure tears as he heard my story. I felt the love of Heavenly Father, and I felt reassured that the abuse was not my fault and

that I was still pure and virtuous. This was the beginning of my path to healing, a path that would continue for many years.

There wasn’t just one moment of healing—it was a process of peace,





GETTING HELP

“Healing may begin with a thoughtful bishop or stake president

or a wise professional counselor. If you had a broken leg, you wouldn’t decide to fix it yourself. Serious abuse can also benefit from professional help. There are many ways to begin healing, but remember that a full cure comes through the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer. Have faith that with effort His perfect, eternal, infinite Atonement can heal your suffering from the consequences of abuse.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 42.

understanding, and answers that came as I studied my scriptures, prayed daily, and became more acquainted with Jesus Christ. As I studied the Savior’s life, I felt increasing love for Him. The Spirit testified truths to me, including my own worth as a daughter of God. As I submitted my heart to the Lord, obeyed His commandments, and sought His will, I was filled with comfort and peace. As I came to know Him, I began to know myself. Eventually, my past didn’t hurt

anymore. The burden was removed. The Savior had healed me.

I have an eternal family now with a wonderful husband and three beautiful daughters. I am blessed to work with youth and to testify that the Atonement of Jesus Christ can heal us from sin, physical pain, and broken hearts. I know this because of the mercy that was extended to me—because I was “encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” (2 Nephi 1:15). ■

HOW DO WE BRING THE LORD’S HEALING INTO OUR LIVES?

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, helped answer this question in his April 2013 general conference talk “The Hope of God’s Light”:

“First, start where you are.

“ . . . We don’t have to wait to cross the finish line to receive God’s blessings. In fact, the heavens begin to part and the blessings of heaven begin to distill upon us with the very first steps we take toward the light. . . .

“Second, turn your heart toward the Lord.

“Lift up your soul in prayer and explain to your

Heavenly Father what you are feeling. Acknowledge your shortcomings. Pour out your heart and express your gratitude. Let Him know of the trials you are facing. Plead with Him in Christ’s name for strength and support. . . .

“Third, walk in the light.

“ . . . [Heavenly Father] sent His Son to this earth to illuminate the way and show us how to safely cross the stumbling blocks placed in our path. He has given us the gospel, which teaches the way of the disciple. It teaches us the things we must know, do, and be to walk in His light, following in the footsteps of His Beloved Son” (*Ensign*, May 2013, 75–76).

I Strive to Be Healthy

Here young adults share their patterns of healthy living based on teachings from the Word of Wisdom, from other scriptures, and from our latter-day prophets. How have these teachings blessed your life? These young adults bear testimony that as we learn and honor these teachings for healthy living, we will receive the promised blessings.



by . . .

ESTABLISHING GOOD SLEEPING HABITS

In today's world, addictive substances are sometimes viewed as a way to deal with pressures and stresses. In addition, many drink coffee because they feel they need extra energy. Because my mother taught me the importance of good sleeping habits, I know that these additional substances aren't necessary; adequate rest is a much more effective solution (see D&C 88:124). When I get a good night's sleep, I have more energy for the day. I am better able to handle the stresses of life, my mind enjoys increased clarity, and I am better able to work under pressure.

Anthony Castillo, Florida, USA

Teachings for healthy living: 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20; Doctrine and Covenants 59:16–20; 88:124; 89; Boyd K. Packer, "Ye Are the Temple of God," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 72–74

ENJOYING MOUNTAIN BIKING

Being healthy and living the Word of Wisdom (see D&C 89) are not merely about staying away from coffee, tea, tobacco, alcohol, and harmful drugs; good health is also about fueling my body with good things and wisely engaging in activities that will enable me to function optimally. I am passionate about mountain biking. By maintaining my physical and spiritual health, I can pursue my passion and know that I will be blessed with strength and endurance.

Brock Dunlap, Texas, USA



GARDENING

We learn from the scriptures that the soul has two parts: body and spirit (see D&C 88:15). Gardening is a healthy hobby that nourishes both. It's hard work; it would be so much easier to run to the store to pick up my veggies and herbs. However, the benefits of gardening go far beyond having access to healthy food. I love the moments of focused meditation that come along with working in a garden. It is a time that I can clear my mind of distractions and focus on the task at hand. Also, gardening is a way for me to gain momentum for living a healthy lifestyle. When I garden, I find that I'm more aware of what I'm eating throughout the day and that I'm more inclined to exercise. It is truly energizing. And when I treat my body well, my spirit benefits also. I feel closer to Heavenly Father and know that I'm becoming the soul he wants me to be.

Laura Gauthier, Illinois, USA

DRINKING GREEN SMOOTHIES

For a long time it was difficult for me to get any fruits and vegetables into my diet because of some serious food allergies. I could hardly eat more than four blueberries at a time without feeling ill. When I discovered green smoothies, everything changed. At first my body struggled, but over time my allergies diminished substantially and I became full of energy. I love creating new smoothies, and I try to put the most nutrient-dense and colorful fruits and vegetables into them: kale, Swiss chard, spinach, lime, peaches, mango, strawberries, coconut, and so on. I am grateful for the Word of Wisdom and for the blessings I've received as I've incorporated its principles into my life.

Tara Walker, Idaho, USA



SEEKING TO REACH MY POTENTIAL

Being diligent in both exercising and eating right has helped me realize how blessed I am to have a healthy body and how important it is to take care of it. I want to be able to live a long, healthy life. I want to be in the best physical, mental, and spiritual condition I can be for as long as possible so I can reach my full potential on earth. I think that is one of the reasons why our Heavenly Father gave us teachings in the scriptures and from living prophets about how to stay healthy—so we will be able to do what we came to earth to do and to carry out His will.

Allyson Macy, Utah, USA





EXERCISING OFTEN

For me, exercise is one of the best ways to rejuvenate my body and my mind. When I get carried away thinking about problems and questions that I have, it is exercise that helps me see things more clearly. I don't always run or lift weights; sometimes I just go for a walk. It's interesting that after exerting energy to exercise, I always have more energy and feel more alert. When I get in a routine and exercise regularly, I have a happier outlook on life. I know that the Lord has given us a stewardship over our bodies. Exercise is one way that we can show Him that we are grateful for the blessing of a mortal body.

Ryan Brown, Michigan, USA



APPRECIATING BOTH BODY AND SPIRIT

I know that the Word of Wisdom is a true code of health for both our spirits and our bodies. As I have learned more about how to eat well, exercise, and seek balance in other aspects of my life, I have gained a deeper understanding of the sacred relationship between our bodies and our spirits. I have learned to respect my mortal body and be grateful for it, no matter what is going on in my life. My testimony of the importance of good health has been reinforced through teachings in the Doctrine and Covenants and teachings from our living prophets. I know we are blessed when we seek to follow these teachings and live them fully.

Christine Baird, Texas, USA



FOCUSING ON THE BLESSINGS

My favorite blessing promised in the Word of Wisdom is that we can “find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). For a long time, this was a very abstract phrase to me. But now I understand that this promise includes improved self-discipline and self-control. We gain greater power to exercise our agency because our minds are clearer, our bodies are stronger, and our hearts are at peace. As I live the Word of Wisdom and maintain a healthy lifestyle, I find that the Lord more readily answers my prayers for health, peace, and joy.

Linda Flores, Washington, D.C., USA

A photograph of a forest path covered in fallen leaves, with a bright, glowing light source in the distance, creating a misty and ethereal atmosphere. The path leads the eye towards the light, which is partially obscured by the trees and mist. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by oranges, yellows, and browns.

I Will Be Your

Light

in the Wilderness

By Lisa Lynnette Magnusson

It had been a long day at work, and I was in no mood to go visiting teaching. I printed off the message from the Church’s website before turning off my computer, planning to skim the text during the red traffic lights on the way to the home of the sister I was to visit. I glanced through the message carelessly as I picked it up off the printer, but the first scripture made me stop and sit back down at my desk: “I will also be your light in the wilderness; . . . wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; and ye shall know that it is by me that ye are led” (1 Nephi 17:13).

The Spirit whispered that although the afternoon’s visiting teaching appointment was for the benefit of the sister I was to visit, this message was meant for me. Though my life was nothing to complain about, I was a young single adult living far away from home, trying to get established in a new career and doing my best to serve actively in a challenging calling. I knew there was a promised land out there somewhere in my future, but at the present, it often felt as if I were trudging through a wilderness with no end in sight. It was easy to feel discouraged.

That afternoon when I visited the sister with whom I had the appointment, she and I shared our testimonies of the Savior with

each other, and my hope was renewed. I was not left to find my way through the darkness alone. The Savior was the light through this unique “wilderness” period of my life. I had felt His guiding influence as I made important life decisions. Just as the Lord prepared Nephi’s family for their journey by providing them with the Liahona and the brass plates, I had been prepared by the faith and power that come through regular scripture study and

temple attendance. Even though at times I yearned for my promised land, I realized that there were many benefits to spending time in the wilderness being led by the Lord. I was learning how to go to Heavenly Father with my concerns and recognize answers to prayers. I was learning to have patience in His timing. I was learning that He

would provide manna to sustain me when I felt emotionally and spiritually famished (see Mosiah 7:19). In short, I was becoming better prepared for my arrival in the promised land.

I often think back to what I learned from that visiting teaching appointment, especially during times when the wilderness seems especially barren and lonely. I look forward to the day when I can stand in my promised land and look back at the many miles I have traveled—not on my own but with the help of the Savior’s guiding light. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Although the afternoon’s visiting teaching appointment was for the benefit of the sister I was to visit, the message was meant for me.



THE MAP FOR YOUR JOURNEY HOME

“[Heavenly Father] didn’t send you on this journey only to wander aimlessly on your own. He wants you to come home to Him. He has given you loving parents and faithful Church leaders, along with a map that describes the terrain and identifies the dangers; the map shows you where peace and happiness can be found and will help you plot your course back home. . . .

“This map is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news, and the joyful way of a disciple of Christ. It is the commandments and example given to us by our Advocate and Mentor, who knows the way because He *is* the way.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Your Wonderful Journey Home,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 127.

Hope and Healing after divorce

**At age 25,
I was divorced.
How would I heal
from the pain?**

Name withheld

When I first met Andy (name has been changed), I was captivated by his charm. He was the quintessential gentleman—responding with “yes, ma’am,” opening car doors, and sending me flowers. He was funny, handsome, and a recently returned missionary. I quickly fell in love and agreed to marry him. Like many young women, I had thought often about how wonderful a temple marriage would someday be. My hope of an ideal marriage with Andy quickly shattered the night of our wedding when the abuse began.

I endured a three-year nightmare of verbal, emotional, sexual, and physical abuse. Andy controlled what I ate and isolated me from friends and family. He blamed me for most of our problems and said, untruthfully, that I was crazy, fat, and irresponsible. Slowly, I began to believe him. I thought that

if I only changed myself, he would be happy and our marriage would last. But my efforts were never enough.

I clung to the gospel, trying to do all I could to save my marriage because I didn’t realize how abusive the situation was. I prayed desperately for help and continually turned to Heavenly Father because I had no one else to talk to.

I kept going to the temple during those years, usually alone, pleading with the Lord for direction on how to save my marriage. Andy and I discussed starting our family, but then the abuse started escalating, and I discovered that he had addictions and was texting another woman. I began to see that our problems couldn’t all be my fault, as he said. I went to the temple nearly every day for a week but continued to feel overwhelmed and chaotic when I thought about whether or not I should stay in my

marriage. Things changed when I finally went to the temple with the decision to file for divorce and leave my marriage; I was filled with clarity and peace and smiled for the first time in weeks. After, I never doubted that confirmation from the Holy Ghost, even when my husband tried to convince me otherwise.

The months following our separation were filled with tears and many prayers. I had suffered so much during my marriage and needed to heal.

More than a year has passed since the divorce was finalized. I am not done healing from the effects of my divorce or my marriage, but I have come a long way from the broken person I was when I left Andy. The journey has been arduous, but as I reflect on my year of healing, I have identified seven choices that helped me reestablish hope and continue to heal.



Strengthen your relationship with Heavenly Father.

I spent a lot of time each day praying. Sometimes I prayed for increased hope, faith, and understanding. Sometimes I prayed for strength to make it through the next five minutes. Sometimes I prayed for forgiveness, sometimes to find the strength to forgive. Many times I just cried and told Heavenly Father how much my heart hurt or how angry I was. I learned that He listens patiently and with love. I was also reassured to know that I could reach Him at any time or place. Most of all, I learned that through His Son and because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can receive power, comfort, and strength beyond our own.

Stand in holy places.

I found that going to the temple was often the only way that I could feel peace and safety. Each time I worshipped in the Lord's house I received sacred, personal revelation. I also made time to study my scriptures daily. As I pondered the words I read, I found

answers to my questions and comfort for my heartache and loneliness. In my journal, I wrote down thoughts and impressions I received during my study. Writing down my experiences helped me to see vividly God's hand working miracles in my life. I also saw many parallels. I knew that, like the people of Alma, I had been delivered from bondage (see Mosiah 24:12–20). Even though I often felt out of place in my parents' family ward, I attended Sabbath meetings. Sometimes I wondered what people might be saying about me, but I went because I needed the spiritual edification and because partaking of the sacrament provided great strength to me.

Consider professional counseling.

In my case, many of my loved ones were too close to the situation to offer helpful counsel. And while I found great support and help through the counsel of my bishop, I also found that I needed the professional advice of a therapist in order to move forward both emotionally and mentally.

Concerning such situations, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "Seek the advice of reputable people with certified training, professional skills, and good values. Be honest with them about your history and your struggles. Prayerfully and responsibly consider the counsel they give and the solutions they prescribe" ("Like a Broken Vessel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 41). I had to meet with several different therapists before I found one I could trust, but counseling has helped me learn how to face and work through the trauma from my marriage. I have also gained many helpful insights about myself from attending counseling.

Establish a support group.

Surrounding myself with people who care about me has been essential to my personal healing. I was blessed to have parents, siblings, extended family members, close friends, home teachers, and visiting teachers who were loving and supportive. They listened compassionately when I needed to talk and refrained from judging or criticizing me. They helped me through feelings of loneliness and isolation, encouraging me to put one foot in front of the other when I did not know if I could go on. These friends and family members provided me with tremendous strength, even when others who were unfamiliar with my story were unkind or made



THE LIGHT OF HOPE

"There may be some among you who feel darkness encroaching upon you. You may feel burdened by worry, fear, or doubt. To you and to all of us, I repeat a wonderful and certain truth: God's light is real. It is available to all! It gives life to all things [see D&C 88:11–13]. It has the power to soften the sting of the deepest wound. It can be a healing balm for the loneliness and sickness of our souls. In the furrows of despair, it can plant the seeds of a brighter hope. It can enlighten the deepest valleys of sorrow. It can illuminate the path before us and lead us through the darkest night into the promise of a new dawn."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Hope of God's Light," *Ensign*, May 2013, 75.



who I am and how much I matter to Heavenly Father. I began by searching my patriarchal blessing for details I had never noticed. I began running, something I had never enjoyed before. When I ran, I could feel some of the heartache fading away. Running also helped me gain appreciation for my body as a creation—a temple—that

Healing from divorce is not easy, but I have learned to rely on the Lord.

the Lord provided as a dwelling place for my spirit. I decided to do things that would push me outside my comfort zone. I jumped into an ice-cold river, ran in a two-day relay, and took a road trip with some friends. I revived old dreams and set goals to see them come true.

Have courage to date again.

Before I began dating again, I identified the things that were important to me in a future spouse. I made sure to live righteously so that I could have the Spirit with me. I prayed for discernment and tried to heed any promptings I received. As I relied on Heavenly Father's help, I began to have positive experiences again with dating. I met a wonderful man who is patient and kind. And although I am still healing, I have found great

peace, satisfaction, and joy as I continue learning about commitment and relationships. Slowly, I have come to believe again that marriage can be what the Lord intends and that I will claim the blessings of a healthy eternal marriage in His time.

Believe that you can heal.

In some ways, divorce seemed like experiencing the death of a loved one. I wondered whether the possibility of an eternal family for me was now void. Sometimes I refused to acknowledge that I felt sad or angry, because I didn't want to appear ungrateful for the blessings I still had. But over time, I learned I had to go through the steps of grieving—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. I never experienced the steps in that exact sequence, and some of them still come and go, but I have faced each of them to some degree. Healing from divorce is not easy. Despite the abuse and heartache that happened in my own marriage and the shock and pain that accompanied my divorce, the learning and growth that continue to come from these experiences have been my greatest blessings. I have learned to rely on the Lord and to become an advocate for myself. And although there are still days when I struggle to look forward with faith, I accept where I am and then trust that the Lord will completely bind up my broken heart (see Isaiah 61:1–3). ■

hasty judgments. As more healing took place, I made new friends in my ward and community. I went back to school and began associating with other singles my age. I found ways to serve others, even though sometimes I just wanted to stay home.

Rediscover yourself.

I lost a large portion of myself in my marriage and subsequently through divorce. But since then I have spent a lot of time rediscovering

Inviting Success

By **Richard M. Romney**
Church Magazines

Sharing the gospel is often as simple as extending an invitation, asking a question, or joining in a conversation. As we prepare our hearts to share the gospel, the Lord will direct us to those who are ready to hear it.

“[The Lord] has prepared the means for us to share the gospel in a multitude of ways, and He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work,” President Thomas S. Monson said in the October 2013 general conference.¹ Here are several examples.



**I saw Harley carrying my stolen bicycle. “I need to ask where you got that,” I said.
—Nick Barton**

Simply by asking others if they are interested in the gospel, you can join in hastening the work of salvation.

Bring Back the Bike

When Nick Barton and his wife, Morgan, moved to Arizona, USA, where Nick would attend law school, they started praying for missionary opportunities. “We asked Heavenly Father to help us become more sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and to be bold enough to take action,” Nick says.

One Saturday, Morgan needed their car for work, so Nick rode his bicycle to campus. When it was time to return home, however, the bike was gone.

“Stolen bicycles were so common that the police asked if there was anything that would help identify it. I remembered that Morgan had glued a label on the handlebar that said, ‘I Love You.’”

Once again Nick prayed. “I asked that I might learn something from the situation,” he says. Then he hopped on the train to get as close as possible to home before calling his wife to come and get him.

“At the next train stop, I saw a big guy with a backwards cap board the train, carrying my bicycle! I saw the ‘I Love You’ on the handlebar, so I knew it was mine,” Nick said. He tapped the man on the shoulder.

“I said, ‘I need to ask you where you got that bike.’ He responded, ‘At a yard sale down the street.’” Nick



explained that his bike had been stolen. The young man replied that he was not a thief and that Nick could have the bike back.

“I thanked him and said I would have the police call him so the ‘yard sale’ could be investigated,” Nick says. “He told me his name was Harley and gave me his phone number. I told him I would share the cost of what he had paid, since we had both been wronged, and I walked off the train glad to have my bicycle back.”

But that was only the beginning.

“Out of curiosity, I called Harley the next morning. He said the police were following through. Then he asked if my wife and I might want to do something later in the day. I realized he was trying to become friends.

“It being Sunday, I told him we were going to church but that we would be happy to get together with him another time. As I hung up the phone, it dawned on me that this was a missionary opportunity pure and clear. I called him back and asked if he would be interested in coming to church with us. He agreed! He attended all the meetings and let me know afterward that he felt the speakers and teachers were talking directly to him.

“Harley had family overseas and moved away shortly after we met,” Nick says. “But he did become our friend, gained respect for the Church, and was reassured that his Heavenly Father is mindful of him.”

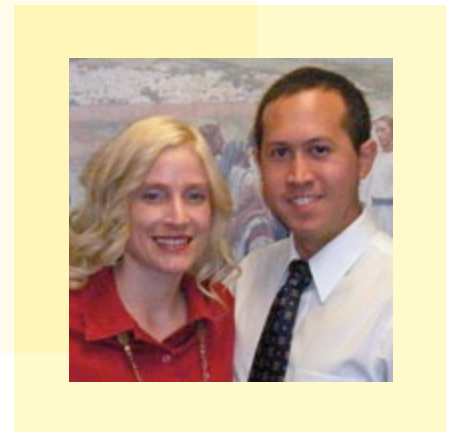


Talk to the Tech

“One day, after listening to a conference message, I had the impression that I needed to talk to the pharmacy technician at the store,” says Hannah Rawhouser, also of Arizona. “The voice inside me said, ‘He is a good person. You need to invite him to a Church activity.’”

The next time Hannah was in the drive-through, she looked for him, but he wasn’t there. Still, the prompting persisted.

“A few weeks later, I pulled up again, and there he was. With the expectation that my time would be brief, I went directly to the matter at



**“Do you go to church?” I asked.
Greg said yes. I handed him my card.
“Call me,” I said.
—Hannah Rawhouser**



Ask the Elevator Operator

As a 26-year-old, Robert G. Ellis Jr. was working as a police officer in a Senate office building in Washington, D.C., USA.

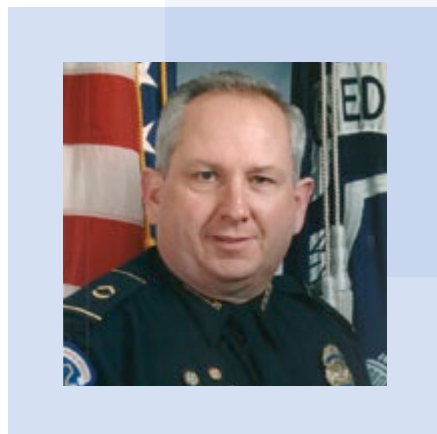
“I spent a lot of time pondering what I had learned about Jesus,” he recalls. “My father and mother didn’t attend any church, but they had allowed me to go, and I had enjoyed attending more than a dozen denominations.” As a newly married young adult, he felt that he should be baptized—but in what church?

“My spirit was troubled. I wanted to find a church that was true to Christ’s teachings. People would say that all the churches were the Lord’s Church, but they did not hesitate to say that another denomination was wrong. I prayed, ‘I want to be baptized, but I don’t know which church to join.’”

Remembering that Jesus Christ said, “Ask, and it shall be given you” (Matthew 7:7), Robert kept pleading. One day while he was at work, Robert again felt troubled, and tears came to his eyes.

“I felt frightened and did not know if my thoughts were right or wrong. Then a peaceful feeling came over me. Without totally realizing why I was doing it, I walked over to an elevator operator and asked, ‘What church do you belong to?’”

The elevator operator was Norman Maxfield, a returned missionary attending Georgetown University.



**“What do you believe in?” Norman asked me. “In Jesus Christ,” I answered proudly.
—Robert G. Ellis Jr.**

hand. ‘Do you go to church?’ I asked. He paused with surprise and then said yes. I handed him my business card. ‘Call me sometime,’ I said and drove away. ‘Well, I did my part,’ I thought. ‘Now I won’t have any more nagging feelings.’”

To her surprise, he called the next day and introduced himself as Greg Eiselin. “He told me later that, because we are both young and single, he thought I was asking him for a date,” she says. “But we ended up talking about religion for three hours, and he began learning about the Church.” Today Elder Eiselin is serving a full-time mission in Montana, USA.

“He looked up from some books. I could tell he was surprised. He said, ‘I’m a Mormon. Why?’”

“I said, ‘I want to be baptized, but I don’t know which church to join.’”

“He asked, ‘What do you believe in?’”

“‘Jesus Christ,’ was the answer I proudly gave.”

“He asked, ‘May I tell you about my church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?’ As he told me that Christ’s Church had been restored to the earth, I knew that my prayers had been answered. The feeling within me was wonderful.”

That was in 1977. Today Brother and Sister Ellis are members of the Church in Virginia, USA.

Rely on the Lord

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “when we are standing as ‘witnesses of God at all times and in all things’ (Mosiah 18:9), the Lord will open ways for us to find and have appropriate communications with those who are seeking. This will come when we seek direction and when we act out of a sincere and Christlike love for others.”²

Nick, Hannah, Greg, Robert, and Norman would all agree that what he said is true. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 4.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Sharing the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 8.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 18–21.

TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR SHARING

There are many ways to invite people to learn about the gospel. Here are 10 suggestions to get you started.

- 1. Strike up a conversation.** As you are getting acquainted, it’s natural to let people know you’re a member of the Church. Simple statements like, “I’m a Latter-day Saint, but many people know us as Mormons,” can open the door.
- 2. Talk while traveling.** Visit with fellow travelers on the bus or plane or with families you meet at vacation spots. One man made it a point to ask taxi drivers about their family and then discuss family home evening.
- 3. Refer friends to Mormon.org.** This website is a great place for those unfamiliar with the Church to get to know it better.
- 4. Invite your friends to chat with the full-time missionaries online or in person.** On Mormon.org, people can have conversations with missionaries. And of course you can always introduce people to the elders or sisters in your area.
- 5. Use social media.** The Church provides an array of opportunities to like or share content online, including memes, quotes, and videos. Hashtags (a word or group of words tagged with #) also enable people to follow web conversations about the Church.
- 6. Share videos.** Become familiar with videos on Mormon.org and biblevideos.lds.org. Watch them with friends or share links. Also mention Mormon Messages, which offer inspiring answers to life’s questions.
- 7. Share cards and posters.** Pass-along cards and posters allow you to share inspiring ideas (see cards on page 29 of the October 2013 *Friend*, for example).
- 8. Ask the missionaries.** Invite your friends to read “Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!” by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.³
- 9. Attend a temple open house.** Let people know about the marvelous opportunity to attend the open house prior to a temple dedication. Offer to go with them.
- 10. Reach out to those who are returning.** Home teachers and visiting teachers have a great opportunity to be missionaries to less-active members, who in turn know others who may be receptive to the gospel.



**By Elder
David A. Bednar**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Faithful Parents AND Wayward Children

Sustaining Hope
While Overcoming
Misunderstanding

One of the greatest heartaches a valiant parent in Zion can suffer is a child who strays from the gospel path. Questions of “Why?” or “What did I do wrong?” and “How can this child now be helped?” are pondered without ceasing in the minds and hearts of such parents. These men and women pray earnestly, search the scriptures diligently, and listen intently to the counsel of priesthood and auxiliary leaders as they turn to the gospel of Jesus Christ for guidance, strength, and solace.

Statements by General Authorities of the Church describing the influence of faithful parents on wayward children have been and continue to be a source of great familial comfort.¹ The

consolation arises from the hope these messages seem to proffer that parents who honor gospel covenants, obey the Lord’s commandments, and serve faithfully can influence the salvation of their sons and daughters who go astray. However, the interpretation of these statements by some members of the Church has contributed to a measure of doctrinal misunderstanding. The confusion derives from the apparent inconsistency of these interpretations with the doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the principles of moral agency and individual accountability for sins and transgressions.

A review of truths emphasized repeatedly in the standard works, of clarifying teachings from modern apostles



and prophets, and of relevant evidence from Church history records can sustain hope while addressing the misunderstanding.

Prophetic Promises about Posterity

The following quotation appears in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith during his service as Church historian and recorder: “When a seal is put upon the father and mother, it secures their posterity, so that they cannot be lost, but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father and mother.”²

A similar teaching, apparently based on the statement by the Prophet Joseph, was made by Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1929: “The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father’s heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.”³

The statements by Joseph Smith and Orson F. Whitney are construed by some members of the Church to mean that wayward children unconditionally receive the blessings of salvation because of and through the faithfulness of parents. However, this interpretation is moderated by the fact that the most complete account of the Prophet’s sermon was not available to Church historians at the time they compiled an amalgamated version of his teachings from the notes of Willard Richards and William Clayton. In

the more complete set of notes recorded by Howard and Martha Coray, Joseph Smith is shown to have qualified his statement to make the promised blessings conditional upon the obedience of the children:

“When a father and mother of a family have [been sealed], their children *who have not transgressed* are secured by the seal wherewith the Parents have been sealed. And this is the Oath of God unto our Father Abraham and this doctrine shall stand forever.”⁴

This clarification is more consistent doctrinally. Except for the additional information contained in the Coray records, the concept of unconditional salvation for disobedient children would contradict many foundational teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, including the second article of faith that “men will be punished for their own sins” (Articles of Faith 1:2).

This understanding also is in accordance with numerous examples in the standard works. For instance, Alma explained to his son Corianton:

“But behold, *ye cannot hide your crimes from God; and except ye repent they will stand as a testimony against you at the last day.*

“Now my son, I would that ye should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, but cross yourself in all these things; *for except ye do this ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.* Oh, remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things” (Alma 39:8–9; emphasis added).

Samuel the Lamanite declared to the Nephites:

“And this to the intent that whosoever will believe might be saved, and that whosoever will not believe, a righteous judgment might come upon them; and also if they are condemned *they bring upon themselves their own condemnation.*

“And now remember, remember, my brethren, that whosoever perisheth, *perisheth unto himself*; and whosoever doeth iniquity, *doeth it unto himself*; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free.

Divine Providence may be considered a type of spiritual power, a heavenly pull or tug that entices a wandering child to return to the fold.



“He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you that ye might choose life or death; and ye can do good and be restored unto that which is good, or have that which is good restored unto you; or ye can do evil, and have that which is evil restored unto you” (Helaman 14:29–31; emphasis added).

A number of additional scriptures likewise substantiate the principle that men and women are agents blessed with moral agency and are accountable for their own thoughts, words, and deeds.⁵

The Tentacles of Divine Providence

The Church has no records of any additional teachings on this specific topic by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Though many subsequent Church leaders have differed in their emphasis on various aspects of the statements by Joseph Smith, Orson F. Whitney, and others, they agree on the fact

that parents who honor temple covenants are in a position to exert great spiritual influence over time on their children. Faithful members of the Church can find comfort in knowing that they can lay claim to the promises of divine guidance and power, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the privileges of the priesthood, in their efforts to help family members receive the blessings of salvation and exaltation.

The “tentacles of Divine Providence” described by Elder Whitney may be considered a type of spiritual power, a heavenly pull or tug that entices a wandering child to return to the fold eventually. Such an influence cannot override the moral agency of a child but nonetheless can invite and beckon. Ultimately, a child must exercise his or her moral agency and respond in faith, repent with full purpose of heart, and act in accordance with the teachings of Christ.

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), former Second Counselor in the First Presidency, provided the most comprehensive explanation of this eternally important concept:

“I believe and accept the comforting statement of Elder Orson F. Whitney:

“The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father’s heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.”⁶

“A principle in this statement that is often overlooked is that they must fully repent and ‘suffer for their sins’ and

Faithful parents may find strength to endure as they follow the examples of other righteous parents with disobedient children. In the Book of Mormon, Father Lehi consistently and constantly encouraged his wayward sons to turn to the Lord.

‘pay their debt to justice.’ I recognize that now is the time ‘to prepare to meet God’ [Alma 34:32]. If the repentance of the wayward children does not happen in this life, is it still possible for the cords of the sealing to be strong enough for them yet to work out their repentance? In the Doctrine and Covenants we are told, ‘The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God,

“And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation’ [D&C 138:58–59].

“We remember that the prodigal son wasted his inheritance, and when it was all gone he came back to his father’s house. There he was welcomed back into the family, but his inheritance was spent. [See Luke 15:11–32.] Mercy will not rob justice, and the sealing power of faithful parents will only claim wayward children upon the condition of their repentance and Christ’s Atonement. Repentant wayward children will enjoy salvation and all the blessings that go with it, but exaltation is much more. It must be fully earned. The question as to who will be exalted must be left to the Lord in His mercy.

“There are very few whose rebellion and evil deeds are so great that they have ‘sinned away the power to repent.’⁷ That judgment must also be left up to the Lord. He tells us, ‘I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men’ [D&C 64:10].

“Perhaps in this life we are not given to fully understand how enduring the sealing cords of righteous parents are to their children. It may very well be that there are more helpful sources at work than we know.⁸ I believe there is a strong familial pull as the influence of beloved ancestors continues with us from the other side of the veil.”⁹

President Faust’s teachings authoritatively summarize the things we do and do not know about righteous parents and wayward children. The influence of parents who honor covenants and obey commandments indeed can have a decisive spiritual impact upon children who stray



DETAIL FROM LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

by activating the tentacles of divine Providence—in ways that have not been revealed fully and are not understood completely. However, righteous parental influence (1) does not replace in the life of an individual the need for the redeeming and strengthening power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, (2) does not overrule the consequences of the unrighteous exercise of moral agency, and (3) does not negate the responsibility of an individual as an agent “to act . . . and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26).

Faithful parents may find strength to endure as they follow the examples of other righteous parents with disobedient children. In the Book of Mormon, Father Lehi consistently and constantly encouraged his wayward sons to turn to the Lord. Lehi “spake unto Laman, saying: O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness!

“And he also spake unto Lemuel: O that thou mightest

be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!

“Now this he spake because of the stiffneckedness of Laman and Lemuel; for behold they did murmur in many things against their father” (1 Nephi 2:9–11).

Later, Lehi was about to depart this earth, yet he still invited and enticed his wayward sons to “hearken unto [his] words” (2 Nephi 1:12):

“Awake! and arise from the dust, and hear the words of a trembling parent, whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent grave. . . .

“And I desire that ye should remember to observe the statutes and the judgments of the Lord; behold, this hath been the anxiety of my soul from the beginning.

“My heart hath been weighed down with sorrow from time to time, for I have feared, lest for the hardness of your hearts the Lord your God should come out in the fulness of his wrath upon you, that ye be cut off and destroyed forever; . . .

“O my sons, that these things might not come upon you, but that ye might be a choice and a favored people of the Lord. But behold, his will be done; for his ways are righteousness forever” (2 Nephi 1:14, 16–17, 19).

An angel of the Lord appeared to rebellious Alma the Younger and declared, “The Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning

thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith” (Mosiah 27:14).

This remarkable experience was due in part to the prayers of Alma—whom the angel twice recognized as a servant of God. Thus, faithful parents can invite the power of heaven to influence their children. Nevertheless, those children remain agents unto themselves, and the choice to repent or not ultimately is theirs. Alma the Younger did repent of his sins and was born of the Spirit (see Mosiah 27:24), the outcome all parents of wayward children yearn for with all of their hearts.

As parents are patient and persistent in loving their children and in becoming living examples of disciples of Jesus Christ, they most effectively teach the Father’s plan of happiness. The steadfastness of such parents bears powerful witness of the redeeming and strengthening powers of the Savior’s Atonement and invites wayward children to see with new eyes and to hear with new ears (see Matthew 13:43).

Acting in accordance with the teachings of the Savior invites spiritual power into our lives—power to hear and heed, power to discern, and power to persevere. Devoted discipleship is the best and only answer to every question and challenge. ■

NOTES

1. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (1938), 321; Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:530; Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:215; Lorenzo Snow, in Brian H. Stuy, comp., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. (1987–92), 3:364; Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:90–91, 179, 182–83; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1979), 685; Spencer W. Kimball, “Ocean Currents and Family Influences,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 111–12; Howard W. Hunter, “Parents’ Concern for Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 63; Boyd K. Packer, “Our Moral Environment,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 68; Russell M. Nelson, “Doors of Death,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 73; Gordon B. Hinckley, in “Prophet Returns to ‘Beloved England,’” *Church News*, Sept. 2, 1995, 4; Boyd K. Packer, “Do Not Fear,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 77; Robert D. Hales, “With All the Feeling of a Tender Parent: A Message of Hope to Families,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 88.
2. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (1938), 321.
3. Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110.
4. Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, comp. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (1980), 241; emphasis added. See also page 300.
5. These scriptures illustrate the principle that men and women are agents who are blessed with and can exercise moral agency and are accountable to God for their actions. The list is not intended to be exhaustive: 2 Corinthians 5:9–10; Galatians 6:7–9; Mosiah 4:30; 7:30–33; Alma 12:12–14; 33–35; 34:13–17; 42:24–30; Doctrine and Covenants 6:33–34; 101:78; Moses 7:32–33.
6. Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110.
7. Alonzo A. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1919, 161.
8. See John K. Carmack, “When Our Children Go Astray,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 7.
9. James E. Faust, “Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 62.



CONNECTING WITH THE BLESSINGS OF *Relief Society*

Like a “fabric of lace,” Relief Society unites Latter-day Saint women and blesses the lives of all.

Connecting with the Gospel

“You are members of the greatest women’s organization in the world, an organization which is a vital part of the kingdom of God on earth and which is so designed and operated that it helps its faithful members to gain eternal life in our Father’s kingdom.”¹

—President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972)

Christa Marsee became a member of the Church at age 19. She sometimes felt unsure of herself as a new member, but attending Relief Society helped her realize she was in a safe and wonderful place. She felt like she belonged.

“Everything was so new to me,” Christa says. “It was as though I had been in a drought, but in Relief Society, I felt truth flowing over me like water. I just drank it in.”

One of her first visiting teaching assignments was to a young sister who was pregnant and had a toddler. “During the time I was her visiting teacher,” Christa says, “her husband was killed in a car accident.” Although Christa didn’t feel equipped to help this young

sister, she tried to comfort her. Through that experience and meaningful opportunities to serve in Relief Society, Christa came to understand the truths of the gospel. She says, “I have learned what it is to mourn with those who mourn. I have observed sufferings of all kinds in my sisters and seen them endure with great dignity.”

Like Christa, women around the world have found that because they belong to Relief Society, they have access to unique power and strength. Women who find themselves isolated from loved ones, feel overwhelmed by trials, or desire more purpose in their lives can draw power from their membership in Relief Society.

Relief Society connects us with sisters who love us—sisters who can help us and whom we can serve. It connects us with important information about practical concerns as well as deeply spiritual matters. As President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained, Relief Society is “like a fabric of lace spread across the continents.”² Its power comes from the ties it creates between sisters and the gospel.



Connecting with Information

“This society is to get instruction through the order which God has established . . . and this society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time.”³—Joseph Smith (1805–44)

As a Relief Society activity leader, Heidi Sampson decided to have representatives from the American Cancer Society speak to her ward about breast cancer awareness and prevention. The night of the activity, the speakers taught them how to detect early signs of cancer.

Six months later, at the age of 32, Heidi discovered a lump. “Because of what I had learned at our Relief Society activity, I knew what to do. During the next several years I went through surgery, reconstruction, chemotherapy, and radiation.”

As ward members learned of her situation, they opened their hearts to her and her family and took care of their needs. They even held a special fast for her. “During that difficult time,” Heidi explains, “I relied on the love of my family, my ward, and especially my Heavenly Father to carry me when I was weak.” Through her trying experience, her appreciation for Relief Society was strengthened. “Relief Society meetings are a way for sisters to learn, to love, and to teach one another,” Heidi says. “I am living proof that this inspired program will bless your life in ways you might never imagine.”



COULD YOU PLEASE HELP ME?

“A few weeks ago, I was hurried and frazzled, with too many to-dos on my list. I had hoped to go to the temple that day but felt I was just too busy. As soon as that thought of being too busy for temple service crossed my mind, it awakened me to what I most needed to do. I left my office to walk over to the Salt Lake Temple, wondering when I was going to recapture the time I was losing. Thankfully, the Lord is patient and merciful and taught me a beautiful lesson that day.

“As I sat down in the session room, a young sister leaned over and reverently whispered, ‘I’m really nervous. This is only my second time in the temple. Could you please help me?’ How could she ever have known that those words were exactly what I needed to hear? She didn’t know, but Heavenly Father knew. He had observed my greatest need. I needed to serve. He prompted this humble young sister to serve me by inviting me to serve her. I assure you that I was the one who benefited most.”

Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, “First Observe, Then Serve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 80.



Connecting with Sisters through Service

“We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us.”⁴—President Thomas S. Monson

Over the course of three months, K. Laura Sommer gave birth to a fifth child, her husband started a new job, and the family moved to a new area far from relatives.

“Each day’s work felt like bricks dragging me down,” she explains. “I was overwhelmed by how much I had to do. For the first time in my life, I felt incapable and embarrassed that I wasn’t able to take care of my family as I had always been able to do.”

Laura felt that asking for help was her only hope, but she didn’t know whom to ask. Finally, she decided

to ask Heavenly Father to direct her to the person who could help her. She prayed, “Father, isn’t there someone who has *nothing to do* who could help me? Then I wouldn’t feel so bad accepting the help.”

The next Sunday at church, Laura and her family sat next to a woman who introduced herself after the meeting. “It looks like you could use some help,” she said. “Can I come over this week and help you? I am at a very strange place in my life. I’ve just moved here, and I have *nothing to do*. I’ve been praying to find someone I could help.”

Laura recalls, “My eyes overflowed with tears of joy as the Spirit filled my heart. Not only had the Lord sent a kind sister to help me, but He had answered my prayer in such a deeply personal way that it left no room for doubt.” Laura recognized that the answer to her prayer had come because a Relief Society sister she barely knew was in tune with the Spirit. Their bond as Relief Society sisters offered them each the chance to minister and be ministered to.

Like Laura, women all over the world—whatever their situation—are connected through the unbreakable bonds of Relief Society. This unique women’s organization is, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) observed, “divinely ordained of God to minister for the salvation of the souls of women and of men.”⁵ Its power as a force for good stems in part from the unity of faithful women spread throughout the earth who are “of one heart and one mind” (Moses 7:18) in their goal to “strengthen families and build up the kingdom of God on the earth.”⁶ As Emma Smith, the first Relief Society president, declared, “We are going to do something extraordinary.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 97.
2. Boyd K. Packer, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 99.
3. Joseph Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 14–15.
4. Thomas S. Monson, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 103.
5. Joseph F. Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 66.
6. The First Presidency, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, ix.
7. Emma Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 14.



Emulating Eliza

By Katherine Nelson



When my husband and I were newly married, we moved into a ward whose age range was very different from that of the young adult wards I was used to. Each week it was with trepidation that I entered the Relief Society room. Many of the older ladies had known each other for years, and the other women either held newborns in their arms or had children and teens waiting for them after the meeting.

A few weeks after we'd moved in, my visiting teachers shared a sweet message with me that included a quote from Eliza R. Snow. Hearing Eliza's name reminded me of my middle name, Snow, and piqued my curiosity about this ancestor of mine.

That evening, I opened *Daughters in My Kingdom*, and for many nights following I studied as much as I could about Eliza. I learned about the beautiful poetry she wrote and about the careful minutes she took at early Relief Society meetings. I discovered her teachings as the second Relief Society general president, including the following: "Has not God endowed you with the gift of speech? . . . If you are endowed with the Spirit of God, no matter how simple your thoughts may be, they will be edifying to those who hear you."¹ The more I learned about this valiant woman, the more I felt her love for

Relief Society and her conviction of its divine purpose.

As I studied, I considered my own shy behavior in Relief Society: how during lessons I had withheld thoughts that might have edified others, or how I had shied away from initiating a conversation with another sister who, like me, sat by herself in the corner. I thought about my flagging efforts as a visiting teacher and how my fears were inhibiting me from developing more fulfilling relationships with my sisters in Christ.

Overcoming my fear of speaking up and becoming more involved in Relief Society didn't happen right away. But I made little goals for each Sunday—beginning with walking straight up to the sister I was supposed to visit teach and asking when I could sit down with her again to get to know her better.

Learning more about Eliza's bold expressions of faith taught me that I could develop the kind of confident communication she both described and exemplified, and discovering her deep appreciation for Relief Society helped me learn to love it too. At a time when I felt out of place, studying more about my ancestor Eliza's Christlike life taught me that often the solution to discomfort and loneliness is to speak up and reach out. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 49.





Faith & Fortitude

Women of the Old Testament

PART 1 (PART 2 TO BE PUBLISHED LATER IN 2014)

We can emulate the Christlike traits of devoted women of the Old Testament.

By Faith S. Watson
Church Magazines

As we consider the extraordinary lives of some of the women mentioned in the Old Testament, we can discover ways in which the characteristics and values that guided their actions have relevance for our day. Following are brief life sketches of six of these women, along with suggested lessons and applications.

Agency

Eve

Regarding Eve and her role, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained:

“All the purposes of the world . . . would be brought to naught without woman—a keystone in the priesthood arch of creation. . . .

“From the rib of Adam, Eve was formed (see Genesis 2:22; Moses 3:22; Abraham 5:16). . . . The rib signifies neither dominion nor subservience, but a lateral relationship as partners, to work and to live, side by side.

“. . . She was designed by Deity to co-create and nurture life, that the great plan of the Father might achieve fruition. Eve ‘was the mother of all living’ (Moses 4:26).”¹

Together Adam and Eve taught their posterity the gospel and set a righteous example for them.

Latter-day Saints honor Eve for her wisdom and courage in providing, with Adam, the opportunity for mortal life to all the human family. Eve said, “Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient” (Moses 5:11).

LESSONS

- Parental responsibility is to be shared between husband and wife.
- We are to live and teach the gospel in our families.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Build unity with my spouse.
- Ponder how to deepen my understanding of the gospel and increase my ability to teach it to others.



Agency
Obedience
Courage
Faith
Wisdom
Trust

Sarah

Sarah was of royal lineage, the wife of the prophet Abraham, and the mother of Isaac.

Sarah and Abraham were originally called Sarai and Abram. After marrying, they eventually moved to Canaan, the land that the Lord gave them for their inheritance. Throughout this time, their faith was tested and grew. (See Genesis 12–14.)

The Lord covenanted with Abram, “I will make of thee a great nation” (Genesis 12:2; see also 15:5; Abraham 2:9). The Lord fulfills His promises in the way and the time He knows is best for us, and it was decades before this promise of posterity was realized.

After years of not being able to bear a child, Sarai gave her handmaid, Hagar, to Abram to wife (see Genesis 16:2), and Ishmael was born.

The Lord changed Sarai’s and Abram’s names to Sarah and Abraham when He confirmed His covenant with Abraham, stating that the patriarch would be “a father of many nations” (see Genesis 17:4–5, 15). The Lord promised that 90-year-old Sarah would have a son (see Genesis 17:16; 18:10). Both Abraham and Sarah rejoiced at this news, perhaps evidencing a bit of joyful disbelief (see Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 17:23–24 [in the Bible appendix]; 18:12). The Lord assured them, “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14). Their son, Isaac, became the father of Jacob, later known as Israel, whose descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel.

LESSONS

- There may be long delays before we receive our righteous desires, but we can be assured that “all these things shall give [us] experience, and shall be for [our] good” (D&C 122:7).
- Having faith in the Lord helps us to be patient as we wait for promised blessings.



WHAT CAN I DO?

- Consider how to make my time spent waiting for the Lord’s blessings more fruitful and productive.
- Think about how I can strengthen my faith and trust in the Lord.

Humility

Faith

Strength

Endurance

Loyalty

Joy

Service

Rebekah

Rebekah was the wife of Isaac and the mother of Esau and Jacob.

When Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac, the servant prayed that he would recognize Isaac's wife-to-be by a simple act: she would be the one who gave the servant and his camels water to drink. Upon his meeting Rebekah at a well, she quickly and eagerly gave water to both the servant and his 10 thirsty camels.

Arriving at the home of Rebekah's family, the servant asked if they would consent to her marriage to Isaac. The family left the decision up to Rebekah, who responded in simple faith, "I will go." Rebekah veiled herself upon seeing Isaac. This act, one writer observed, "was a sign of her virtue, reverence, humility, and modesty and showed respect for her future spouse." Such qualities indicated Rebekah's "readiness for a covenant marriage."²

After the couple married, Rebekah was unable to conceive a child for many years, but eventually, in answer to prayer, she was blessed with twin sons, Esau and Jacob. The Lord revealed to Rebekah that the second-born son, Jacob, was to have the birthright (Esau showed his disregard for the birthright by selling it to Jacob for "a mess of pottage"). An inspired Rebekah helped guide Jacob to receive the birthright blessing. (See Genesis 24; 25:19–34; 27:1–40.)

LESSONS

- When we are in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing, blessings come.
- "Women are appointed, Rebekahlike, to be guides and lights in righteousness in the family unit."³—Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Charity

Service

Modesty

Kindness

Patience

Charity

Virtue

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Respond, "I will go," when prompted by the Spirit.
- Seek for and act upon revelation for my family, as Rebekah did for hers.

Virtue

Rachel and Leah

Sisters Rachel and Leah were married to Jacob, the son of Isaac and Rebekah.

When Jacob met Rachel, he loved her immediately and agreed to serve her father, Laban, seven years for her. Then Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah, the elder daughter. Nevertheless, Jacob was soon allowed to marry Rachel also, on condition that he serve seven more years.

Jacob loved Rachel dearly, but she could not have children for many years, a great trial for her. Although Jacob had not first been interested in Leah (her great trial), she was able to bear him children. The sisters sought Jacob's love and attention through giving him sons. Both also gave Jacob their handmaids to marry in order to increase the number of their children. In this way they became the mothers of the twelve tribes of Israel. (See Genesis 29–30.)

Eventually the sisters learned to work together. When Jacob was instructed by the Lord to return to the land of Canaan, leaving all he had worked for, Rachel and Leah together replied, "Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do" (Genesis 31:16).

LESSONS

- Even though our circumstances may be different from what we expected, we will be blessed as we trust in the Lord and align our will with His.
- Although our family situations may seem less than ideal, great blessings will come to us through our obedience and faith.



WHAT CAN I DO?

- Put my full trust in the Lord and focus on the good in my family situation as I strive to "make weak things become strong" (Ether 12:27).
- Evaluate my family relationships and ask myself if there is someone in my family with whom I can develop a better relationship.

Faithfulness

Sacrifice

Motherhood

Long-suffering

Prayerfulness

Forgiveness

Courage

Deborah

We read in Judges 2:7 that “the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua.” However, the Israelites then began to forget the Lord, and the next 200 years were characterized by periods of apostasy and repentance. During this time, individuals known as judges, chosen either by the Lord or by the people, served to deliver the Israelites from their ever-present enemies.

Deborah was one of these judges, the only woman recorded in scripture to serve in this capacity. She was a prophetess, judge, and deliverer. In her role as prophetess, Deborah did not hold the priesthood or possess ecclesiastical keys but enjoyed the gift of prophecy in a more general sense (see Revelation 19:10).⁴

Deborah and the Israelite captain Barak delivered Israel from the Canaanites and then sang a song of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord (see Judges 4–5). Deborah’s courage and faith inspired the Israelites so that they enjoyed a 40-year period of peace.



LESSONS

- We win battles with evil through commitment to the Lord, courage to act as we are inspired to do so, and giving the credit to the Lord.
- As we love, lead, and serve others, we can have joy and satisfaction in fulfilling the Lord’s plan for us.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Ponder how I can strengthen my own faith so I can inspire others.
- Consider how the Lord has blessed me to be an instrument in His hands. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 87.
2. Cynthia L. Hallen, “Rebekah,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2002, 40.
3. Bruce R. McConkie, “Our Sisters from the Beginning,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1979, 63.
4. See James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), 228–29.

Courage

Commitment

Love

Compassion

Leadership

Spirituality



By Elder
Tad R. Callister
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy



The Lord's Standard of MORALITY

Some years ago my father, an attorney, was trying a lawsuit. For his authority, he cited only one case—a California Supreme Court case issued many years before. His opponent cited a number of lower-court decisions of more recent vintage.

The judge said to my father, “Mr. Callister, don’t you have a more recent case than this?” My father looked at the judge and replied, “Your Honor, may I remind you that when the supreme court speaks on a matter, it only needs to speak once.” The

judge nodded with approval. He was reminded that the supreme court trumps all lower-court decisions, however numerous or recent they may be.

So it is with God our Father—He needs to speak only once on the issue of morality, and that one declaration trumps all the opinions of the lower courts, whether uttered by psychologists, counselors, politicians, friends, parents, or would-be moralists of the day.

It is almost unbelievable to think that God has given to His children the power that is most prized and sacred to

Him—the power to create life. Because God gave us this power, He, and He alone, has the right to prescribe how it should be used.

Contrary to much public sentiment, there is nothing negative or restraining about God’s moral standards. Rather, they are positive, uplifting, and liberating. They build relationships of trust, they enhance self-esteem, they foster a clear conscience, and they invite the Spirit of the Lord to bless individual and married lives. They are the proven standards for happy marriages and stable communities.

**Our choice to obey
or disobey God’s
standard of morality
will largely determine our
happiness in life.**

What, then, is the Lord's standard for use of the sacred power of procreation—His standard of morality? In truth, the Lord's standard of morality is not so much a list of do's and don'ts as it is a principle, which can be expressed as follows: The procreative power is to be exercised in the marriage relationship for two key reasons: (1) to bind and strengthen ties between spouses and (2) to bring souls into the world. These uses have the blessing and endorsement of the Lord.

On the other hand, the procreative power is not to be exercised outside the husband-wife relationship. Accordingly, any conscious thoughts or voluntary actions that stimulate or result in the expression of the procreative power outside the marriage relationship are disapproved by the Lord.

I now cite some of the Lord's standards of morality so as to minimize any misunderstanding or ambiguity.

FORNICATION AND ADULTERY

The Lord forbids fornication and adultery despite how the world feels toward these behaviors. These acts constitute the ultimate use of the procreative power with someone of the opposite sex with whom we are not legally married. It is fornication if neither party is married; it is adultery if either or both parties are married.

The Apostle Paul said,

"For this is the will of God, . . . that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thessalonians 4:3; emphasis added). He also said, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: *neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers . . .* shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; emphasis added).

Sometimes people do not realize the seriousness of these transgressions or, in some cases, rationalize it away. Corianton did not seem to realize the seriousness of what he had done when he sinned with the harlot Isabel. Alma, his father, put it in perspective: "Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord?" (Alma 39:5). Joseph also spoke of this great evil when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

God's moral standards build relationships of trust, enhance self-esteem, foster a clear conscience, and invite the Spirit of the Lord to bless individual and married lives.

INAPPROPRIATE TOUCHING

Inappropriate touching arouses the procreative powers. Accordingly, in the premarital setting it is contrary to God's moral standard to touch the private or sacred parts of another's body, whether or not the person is clothed.¹

SELF-ABUSE

The Lord condemns self-abuse. Self-abuse is the act of stimulating



the procreative power of one's own body. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“Do not be guilty of tampering or playing with this sacred power of creation. . . .

“ . . . It is not pleasing to the Lord, nor is it pleasing to you. It does not make you feel worthy or clean.”²

SAME-GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

Some would have us believe that the Church's stand against same-gender physical relationships is a temporary policy and not an eternal doctrine. Such a belief would be at odds with the scriptures, with the words of modern prophets, and with the plan of salvation, all of which teach the necessity of eternal marriage between a man and a woman as a condition to exaltation.

A same-gender relationship is inconsistent with God's eternal pattern that husbands and wives not only have children in mortality but also have eternal increase in their exalted condition.

We recognize that everyone is a son or daughter of God and deserves to be treated as such. We all struggle with imperfections, some not of our choosing. But we also believe in an infinite Atonement that has the capacity in this life or the life to come to endow us with every power necessary to convert our weaknesses and imperfections into strengths. The Lord promised us, “For if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

Those with same-gender tendencies have a duty to (1) abstain from immoral relationships and (2) do all within their power to avail themselves of the refining, perfecting powers of the Atonement. In the interim, however, those who have same-gender tendencies but do not act on them are worthy to hold Church positions and receive a temple recommend.³

Any conscious thoughts or voluntary action that stimulate or result in the expression of the procreative power outside the marriage relationship are disapproved by the Lord.

TENTACLES OF THE ADVERSARY

Now I share some danger signals that precede some of the sins I have mentioned. In some regards, Satan is like an octopus trying to capture us. If one tentacle does not work, he will try another and another until he finds one that takes hold. Following are some of the tentacles of the evil one designed to cause us to break God's standard of morality.

Pornography

God desires that His children not watch any movie or TV show, go to any website, or view any magazine that is pornographic in any way. Pornography is any picture or narrative that feeds the carnal man within. It is *repulsive* to the Spirit of the Lord.

No one can claim to be fooled by the effects of pornography, believing there is any such thing as an innocent glance.

It is a poisonous, venomous, unforgiving snake that will strike the moment you take your first look and will continue to strike with a full portion of venom with each look thereafter.

If you are afflicted with this malady, you need to do all within your power to overcome it. It may require confession, intense prayer, fasting, immersion in the scriptures, replacing idle time with constructive time, putting strict boundaries on Internet usage, professional counseling, and the like, but you can overcome it. At some point willpower will be an indispensable ingredient—there is not a pill or counseling technique to solve every addiction.

Immodest Dress

Our dress affects not only our thoughts and actions but also the thoughts and actions of others. Accordingly, Paul the Apostle counseled “women [to] adorn themselves in modest apparel” (1 Timothy 2:9).

The dress of a woman has a powerful impact upon the minds and passions of men. If it is too low or too high or too tight, it may prompt improper thoughts, even in the mind of a young man who is striving to be pure.⁴

Men and women can look sharp and be fashionable, yet they can also be modest. Women particularly can dress modestly and in the process contribute to their own self-respect and to the moral purity of men. In the end, most women get the type of man they dress for.

Unclean Thoughts

It has been said, “You can watch the birds fly by; just don’t let them build a nest on your head.” There is nothing wrong with noticing the pretty young lady or handsome young man as they walk by—that is normal. But if those thoughts turn to lust, then the nest is being built.

We cannot avoid seeing every improper billboard or immodestly dressed person, but we can drive out the improper thought once it arises. The sin is not in involuntarily seeing something improper; the sin is in entertaining the thought once it comes. The scriptures tell us, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

In essence, our thoughts become the seeds of our actions. We do have the power within us to take control of our lives and our thoughts. Good and evil thoughts cannot coexist in our minds any more than light and dark can exist at the same time and in the same place. At some point we must decide which will be our invited guest.

If we so desire, we can drive out every evil thought and immediately replace it with an uplifting song or poem or scripture. Just as darkness flees at the presence of light, so evil flees at the presence of good.

Secluded Places and Tempting Friends

At certain times and places, no matter how strong we are, we have less resistance. Some of the best of men and women in the worst of circumstances have fallen. It happened to King David as he watched Bathsheba at night-time, at first from a seemingly safe distance (see 2 Samuel 11:2–4). None of us should think we are too powerful or

too immune to succumb. Secluded locations, late nights, and morally loose friends have incredible magnetic fields to draw us into Satan’s clutches.

Rationalization

Two oft-repeated rationalizations are used to support moral transgression. The first is “I loved her.” Satan is the great counterfeiter. He tries to palm off lust as love. There is a simple test to detect the difference. Love is motivated by self-control, obedience to God’s moral laws, respect for others, and unselfishness. On the other hand, lust is motivated by disobedience, self-gratification, and lack of discipline.

The second rationalization is “No one will ever know.” The Lord has dispelled that myth on multiple occasions. He declared, “The rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the

housetops, *and their secret acts shall be revealed*” (D&C 1:3; emphasis added).

There is no field so dark or corner so secluded that no one will ever know. God will know, and you will know if you violate His moral law.

REPENTANCE

If we have made moral mistakes in our lives, we can repent because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The first and foundational step to living a morally clean life for the future is to repent of past transgressions, to exchange a foundation of sand for a foundation of rock. Often that commences with confession.

Repentance, however, is not just a matter of time or forsaking a sin or making a confession. Most of all, repentance is an honest change of heart, a burning resolve to live a morally clean life—not because we have to but because we want to.

God made it clear that we cannot violate His standards without suffering the consequences, but because He is

Lust is motivated by disobedience, self-gratification, and lack of discipline.

loving and compassionate beyond measure, He gives us this glorious hope:

“For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

“*Nevertheless, he that repents* and does the commandments of the Lord *shall be forgiven*” (D&C 1:31–32; emphasis added).

To all honest souls who change their hearts and forsake their sins, He has promised, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).

However, it is always better to remain clean than to sin and repent afterward. Why is that? Because certain adverse consequences of sin may remain even after repentance, such as disease or a child born out of wedlock or damage to our reputation. Our goal in life is not just to be clean but also to be perfect. The quest for perfection is accelerated when we are clean, but it is stymied when we are not.

Alma taught, “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). We cannot break God’s moral laws with impunity and be happy because God, who created us, placed within our souls a moral compass known as our conscience. Anytime we violate God’s standard of morality, that conscience goes to work—it gnaws at us, it triggers feelings of guilt and remorse, and it acts as a divine witness testifying to the truth of that standard.

We may try to ignore it and we may try

to suppress it, but we cannot escape it. God’s standard of morality cannot be dismissed; it cannot be diluted or compromised; it can only be obeyed or disobeyed. Eventually we either fight it or embrace it. Our choice will largely determine our happiness in life.

BLESSINGS OF A MORAL LIFE

The blessings of living a clean and moral life are overwhelming. Such a life will bring self-confidence and self-esteem. It will result in a clear conscience. It will make us eligible for a spouse of like purity and will make the expression of the procreative power in the marriage relationship sweeter and more rewarding because we have reserved it for the time the Lord Himself has endorsed.

Because the Lord loves us immensely and wants us to be happy, He has announced His intentions for His children in these latter days: “For I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness” (D&C 100:16).

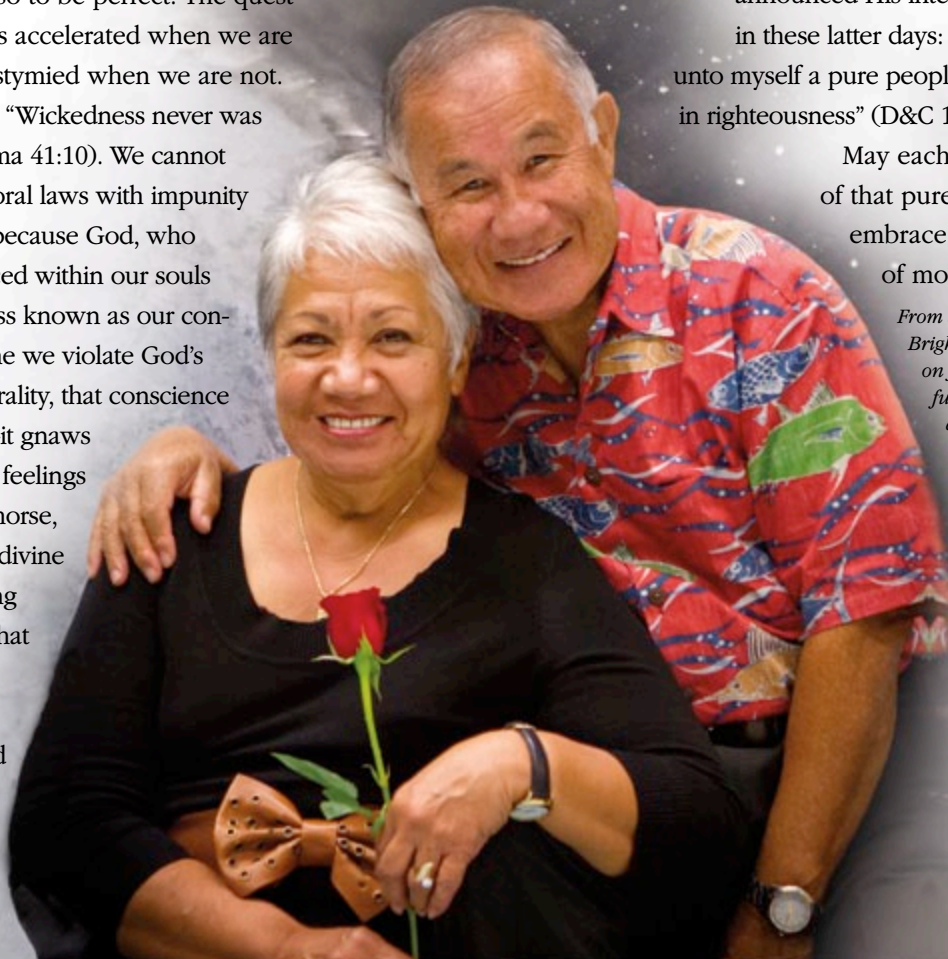
May each of us be a part of that pure generation and embrace the Lord’s standard of morality. ■

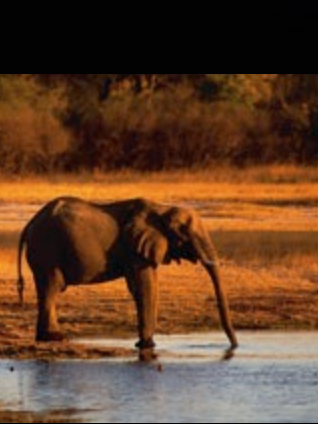
From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on January 22, 2013. For the full address, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. See Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69.
2. Boyd K. Packer, *To Young Men Only* (1976), 4, 5.
3. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 21.4.6.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Pornography,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 90.

Love is motivated by self-control, obedience to God’s moral laws, respect for others, and unselfishness.





Zimbabwe

LAND OF BEAUTY, PEOPLE OF FAITH

Zimbabwe has a thriving community of Latter-day Saints.

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

The Beauty of Zimbabwe

Considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, Victoria Falls on the Zimbabwean border is neither the widest nor the deepest waterfall in the world—but many claim it to be the largest in sheer volume of water. More than a mile (1.6 km) wide, cascades of water plummet 350 feet (108 m) to crash on rocks below. The roaring falls kick up such a heavy spray that you can't even see the base of the falls during the wet season.

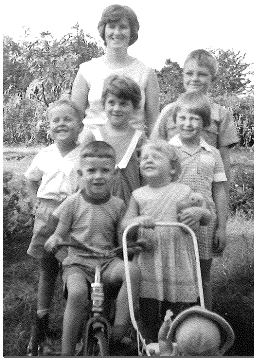
Victoria Falls is only one of many stunningly beautiful sights in Zimbabwe. Located in southeast Africa, Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) lures travelers from all over the world to experience its national parks, wildlife, beauty, and culture.

Whether you want to travel with a wildlife safari or try your hand at white-water rafting down the thundering Zambezi River, Zimbabwe has a lot to offer—including a thriving community of Latter-day Saints.

The Church in Zimbabwe

There are more than 23,000 members of the Church living in Zimbabwe. Membership has grown swiftly in the last 35 years. Prior to 1980 for example, there were just over 1,000 members.

The prophetic declaration issued by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) on June 8, 1978, that “all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color” (Official Declaration 2) had a positive impact on the growth of the Church in Zimbabwe.



Primary children in Kwekwe, 1965.

Many Latter-day Saints have helped strengthen the Church in Zimbabwe. Here is a brief look at some of those pioneers.

Modern-Day Pioneers in Zimbabwe
Hubert Henry Hodgkiss

Missionaries were sent to Southern Rhodesia for a limited time in the early 1930s. Yet by 1935 all missionaries were pulled from Southern Rhodesia (then part of the South African Mission) and the area was closed because of the shortage of missionaries and

the distance from the mission home in Cape Town, South Africa.

In September of 1950, eight missionaries were sent to reopen Southern Rhodesia. Five months later, the first convert baptism in the area took place.

Born in England in 1926, Hubert Henry Hodgkiss moved to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, in 1949. He initially learned about the Church from a friend who was investigating the gospel. Hugh had doubts about the restored gospel and set out to prove to his

TIME LINE

1927: Two sons of a member who emigrated from South Africa are the first members baptized in Southern Rhodesia.

1930: President Don M. Dalton of the South African Mission sends the first missionaries to work in the new Rhodesia District.

1935: President Don M. Dalton stops sending missionaries to Southern Rhodesia.



1950: In September, President Evan P. Wright assigns eight missionaries to reopen Southern Rhodesia.

1951: Hugh Hodgkiss is the first convert baptized in Southern Rhodesia.

Latter-day Saints in Harare, Zimbabwe, come together to celebrate a baby blessing in 1985.



friend that the Church was not true. Instead, after searching the gospel closely, Hugh developed a testimony of its truthfulness and decided to be baptized. "I was wrong," he told his friend. "I am joining the Church."¹

Hugh was baptized February 1, 1951, marking the first convert baptism in Southern Rhodesia. He enjoyed being around people and made friends everywhere he went. His friendly nature allowed him to make great contributions to the growth of the Church in the area.

In 1959 Hugh became president of the Salisbury Branch. His counselors were also local members. This was the first time this branch presidency consisted of local members. Before this, full-time missionaries had always filled the responsibilities of the branch presidency.



The Gweru stake young men at an activity in the winter of 2012. The young men and their leaders reaped maize, then enjoyed eating food and playing soccer.

1959: The first known missionary to serve from Southern Rhodesia, Jean Wood, serves in the South Africa Mission.



1964: Northern Rhodesia becomes Zambia, and Southern Rhodesia becomes Rhodesia.

1978: President E. Dale LeBaron organizes the first Rhodesian District Presidency.

1980: Great Britain recognizes Rhodesia's independence; the country's name is changed to Zimbabwe.



1985: On August 24–25 the Johannesburg South Africa Temple is dedicated.

Ernest Sibanda

Ernest Sibanda met two Mormon missionaries on bicycles—Elder Black and Elder Kaelin—in December 1978. They left a Book of Mormon with him. Before their visit, Ernest had already spent many years studying religion. In fact, he had been a teacher for his church for nine years and a pastor for three years.

The night Ernest received his copy of the Book of Mormon he stayed up until 2:00 in the morning reading enthusiastically. He couldn't wait to meet the missionaries the following day. Ernest told them that he had learned more from Joseph Smith about Jesus Christ than all the ministers he had ever met. Ernest was baptized shortly thereafter, followed by his wife and children a few weeks later.

Of his baptism day, he wrote, "I felt very free. I felt released from every evil. I found there was love in me for my family. I found there was love within me for the Church."²

Ernest Sibanda proved to be a great strength to the Church. He served as Sunday School president, branch clerk, and second counselor in a branch presidency. He also fulfilled an assignment from the South Africa mission president to translate hymns from English to Shona.

Edward Dube

In the April 2013 general conference, Edward Dube was called to be a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, making him the first General Authority of the Church from Zimbabwe. This was only the most recent of many firsts for Elder Dube. He was also the first native stake president, first native mission president, and first native Area Seventy from Zimbabwe. Elder Dube has been a true pioneer of righteous leadership.

Before all that, however, there was another first for Elder Dube: his first day attending church. Two years before he went to church for the first time, he was given a Book of Mormon by a Latter-day Saint man for whom



he was working. Elder Dube read the Book of Mormon and felt its influence and power.

In February 1984 Elder Dube accepted an invitation to attend a fast and testimony meeting at a local branch. He felt so nervous when he entered the chapel that he almost immediately turned around and walked back out.

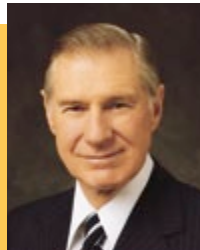
Soon, however, Elder Dube's feelings began to change once the branch president stood and bore testimony of the Book of Mormon. A testimony of the Book of Mormon was one area Elder Dube felt was common ground. He



In 1994 President Beloved Mundera walked with his family over one mile (1.6 km) to church every Sunday, carrying in his wheelbarrow everything his branch needed for the meetings.

1987: The Zimbabwe Harare Mission is organized from the South Africa Johannesburg Mission.

1991: On October 25 Elder James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicates Zimbabwe for the preaching of the gospel.



1994: The Church Educational System hires Edward Dube as country director. He establishes seminary and institute classes throughout Zimbabwe.

1998: President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) visits Zimbabwe and speaks to about 1,500 Latter-day Saints. Several government officials attend.



stood and shared his own thoughts and feelings of the Book of Mormon after several other members bore testimony.

Soon after that first sacrament meeting, Elder Dube began to investigate the Church in earnest. He was baptized several months later. He then served a full-time mission in the Zimbabwe Harare Mission. Elder Dube married Naume Keresia Salizani on December 9, 1989. They have four children.

Elder Dube has seen many ups and downs for the Saints in Zimbabwe as a result of political turmoil. Through it all, he has relied on the Lord for strength and guidance. “I look back on my life and I truly feel grateful,” he said. “The gospel has been everything in my life.”³

“To me, Elder Dube is a Brigham Young or Wilford Woodruff of Zimbabwe,” says President

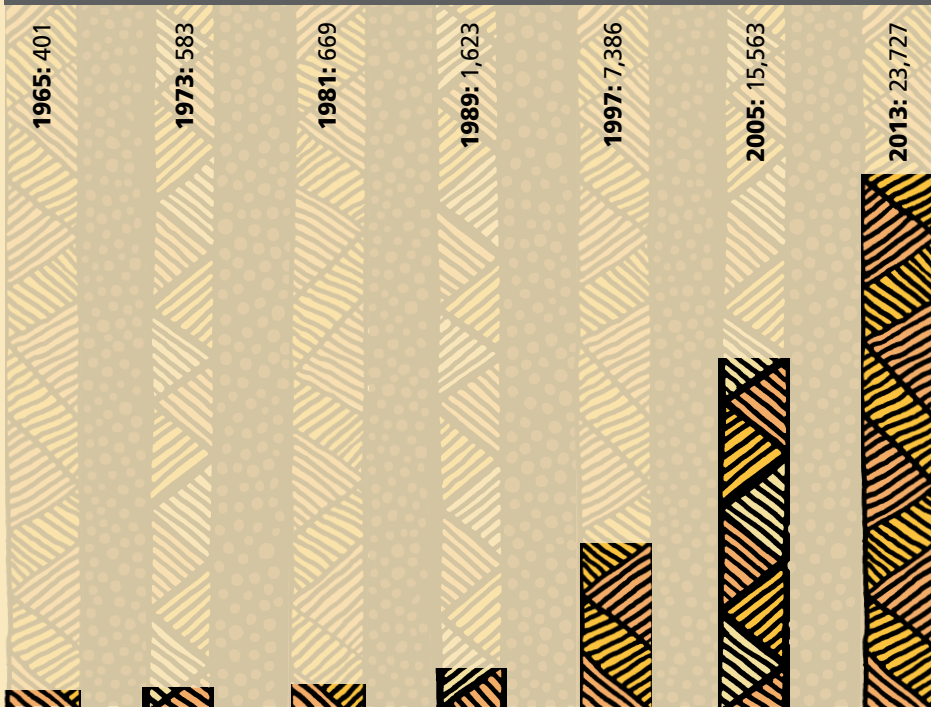
Keith R. Edwards, a former member of the Seventy who currently serves as president of the England Missionary Training Center. President Edwards was mission president of the Zimbabwe Harare Mission from 2000 to 2003 and worked extensively with Elder Dube, who was serving as stake president at the time. “Elder Dube just has a vision of what the gospel is supposed to do and how it is supposed to work.”⁴

Missionary Efforts in Zimbabwe

During his time in Zimbabwe, President Edwards witnessed firsthand the growth of the Church in a land that is embracing the gospel more and more. “The people of Zimbabwe enjoy life,” President Edwards says. “They are happy and, by nature, very spiritual. They’re very easy to teach.”



GROWTH OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN ZIMBABWE



CHURCH STATISTICS IN ZIMBABWE*

Total membership: 23,727

Missions: 1

Wards and branches: 60

Family history centers: 4

** As of June 2013*

1999: Zimbabwe's first stake is organized in Harare. The first full edition of the Book of Mormon is published in Shona, a native language of Zimbabwe.



2007: The triple combination (Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price) is published in Shona.

2009: Edward Dube becomes the first native mission president to serve in Zimbabwe.



2013: Edward Dube is called to the First Quorum of the Seventy, making him the first General Authority from Zimbabwe.

President Edwards explains that the missionary badge—because it has the name of the Savior on it—is one of the easiest ways for missionaries to start gospel conversations with Zimbabweans. Locals often read the name of the Church and perk up. “They say, ‘We’re friends of Jesus Christ too.’ It is an immediate bond,” says President Edwards.

There are more future leaders and pioneers joining the Church all the time in Zimbabwe. “The missionaries are always busy,” President Edwards says. ■

NOTES

1. From Greg Hodgkiss, Hubert Henry Hodgkiss biographical sketch, June 26, 2012, Zimbabwe country case file, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. *All Are Alike unto God*, ed. E. Dale LeBaron (1990), 129.
3. Edward Dube, in R. Scott Lloyd, “New General Authority: Elder Edward Dube,” *Church News*, Apr. 20, 2013, ldschurchnews.com.
4. From an interview with Keith R. Edwards, Apr. 24, 2013.

Kwekwe Ward leaders and missionaries in 2011.





By Elder
Dale G. Renlund
Of the Seventy

MAINTAINING AN Eternal Perspective

In the late 1980s a man I will call Mr. Brown came to a hospital in Salt Lake City with severe heart disease. Despite the most advanced medications available, his heart could not adequately support his circulation. His medical providers determined that he would soon die without a heart transplant. While he waited for a suitable donor heart, his condition worsened and surgeons had to implant mechanical pumps.

At that time mechanical pumps were useful for only a short time. After a few days other organ systems would begin to fail. All involved in Mr. Brown's care knew that if a donor heart did not become available soon, he would certainly die.

A suitable donor heart became available, and Mr. Brown received a new heart. Unfortunately, the heart did not work. Now his situation became dire. But just as his doctors were about to give up, another donor heart became available. This donor heart was marginal at best and could not be used for any other recipient. The doctors involved in Mr. Brown's care decided that this marginal heart was his last hope and that they should attempt to use it.

Mr. Brown soon underwent another operation, and within hours he began to recover. The mechanical

pumps were removed, and over the course of 10 days he was ready to be discharged from the hospital.


The day before his discharge, I walked into Mr. Brown's hospital room and noticed that something was not right. He looked angry. He sat on his bed, gripping the hospital tray with his breakfast on it.

"Mr. Brown, what is wrong?" I asked.

Through clenched teeth, he replied, "The oatmeal isn't hot, and the milk isn't cold!"

Think of it! Ten days before, Mr. Brown was near death. Now he was complaining about the hospital food. For that moment he had lost sight of the bigger picture—of where he had been and of the future he now had. He would go on to live 18 years with an excellent quality of life and die of something unrelated to his heart.

It is easy to fall into the same trap that Mr. Brown found himself in that morning in the hospital, having lost sight of the long-term perspective. When our day-to-day challenges loom before us, it is natural to focus on the here and now. But when we do, we may make poor choices, become depressed, or experience hopelessness. Because of this human tendency, prophets have admonished us to remember the eternal perspective. Only then can we successfully navigate mortality.



*Remember
that life is
more than the here
and now, that life
continues after
death, and that our
choices have eternal
consequences.*

“Beware Lest Thou Forget”

Surprisingly, losing the eternal perspective is a risk whether we face trials or prosperity. In the Old Testament, Moses warned the Israelites that once they found themselves blessed beyond measure in the promised land, they must “beware lest thou forget the Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:12).

In the Book of Mormon, Mormon stated the problem when he wrote, “Yea, and we may see at the very time

when [God] doth prosper his people, . . . then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity” (Helaman 12:2).

President Brigham Young (1801–77) issued a similar warning. He said: “The worst fear that I have about [members of this Church] is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and his people, wax fat, and kick

themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth.”¹

Anciently, prophets used tangible objects to serve as reminders of God’s goodness to help the people maintain a long-term perspective. Moses admonished, “Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deuteronomy 11:18).

To be obedient to this direction, the children of Israel wrote Moses’s prophetic words on strips of parchment, enclosed them in tiny boxes, and bound the boxes on their arms and foreheads. These frontlets, or phylacteries, were worn during prayer to help the people remember God and His goodness to them.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

How can I better remember God’s goodness to me?

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught:

“There is a simple cure for the terrible malady of forgetting God, His blessings, and His messages to us. Jesus Christ promised it to His disciples when He was about to be crucified, resurrected, and then taken away from them to ascend in glory to His Father. . . .

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you’ [John 14:26].

“The key to . . . remembering . . . is receiving the Holy Ghost as a companion. It is the Holy Ghost who helps us see what God has done for us. It is the Holy Ghost who can help those we serve to see what God has done for them” (“O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 68).

At the Lord’s direction, Joshua, who succeeded Moses, gathered 12 stones to commemorate the miracle that allowed Israel to pass through the river Jordan without getting wet. Regarding the 12 stones, Joshua told the people:

“When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

“Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

“For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over . . . :

“That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty” (Joshua 4:21–24).

Remembering God’s Goodness

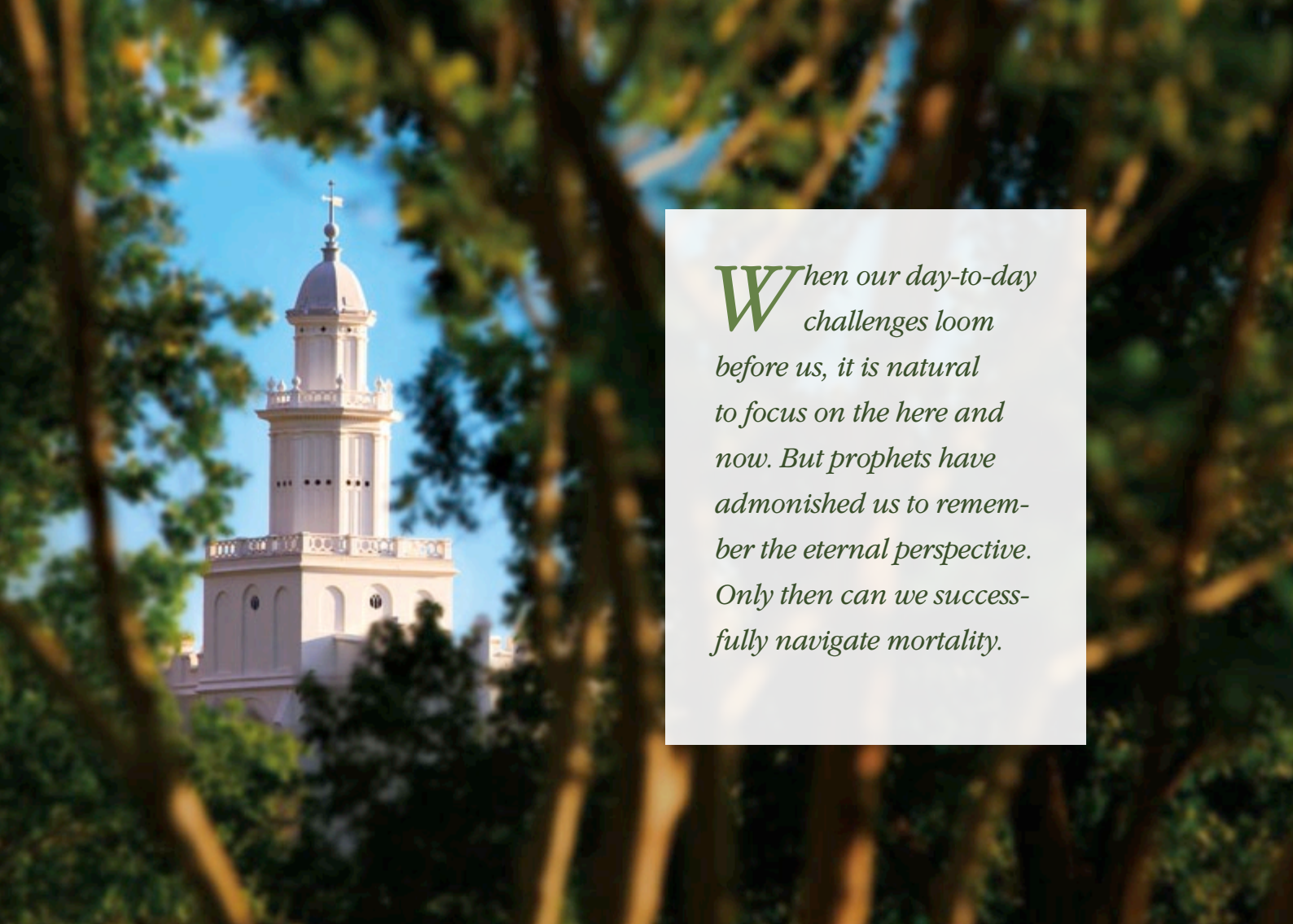
Another noteworthy example occurred after the Lord had miraculously blessed the Israelites in defeating the Philistines. After the victory, Samuel took a stone and placed it at the scene of two previous defeats. He named the stone Ebenezer (meaning “the stone of help”), saying, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12 and footnote *b*). This stone was another physical reminder of God’s goodness.

Robert Robinson, in his famous hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,”² referenced this bit of Israelite history when he penned:

*Here I’ll raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I’m come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.*

Ebenezer, the stone of help, the outward symbol of God’s goodness, helped Israel remember the greatness of God. The hymn suggests that each of us do the same—raise an Ebenezer to remind us of God’s goodness and engender our constant gratitude.

While we may not use frontlets or stones, each of us needs to actively maintain an eternal perspective. Maintaining an eternal perspective means we remember that life is more than the here and now, that life continues after death, and that our choices have eternal consequences.



When our day-to-day challenges loom before us, it is natural to focus on the here and now. But prophets have admonished us to remember the eternal perspective. Only then can we successfully navigate mortality.

Whether we are served cold oatmeal or riches in abundance, we are all “prone to wander, . . . prone to leave the God [we] love.” The remedy for wandering away from God is also suggested in the hymn: “Let Thy goodness, as a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee.”

By remembering and keeping in mind what great things God has done for us, including the gift of His Son, we can “safely . . . arrive at home.”³

The Sacrament

What is our Ebenezer? What tangible objects help us maintain an eternal perspective? For Latter-day Saints, one of those objects is the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

Each Sunday the sacrament helps us remember God’s goodness and marvelous promises. By partaking of simple, tangible objects—a piece of bread and a sip of water—we promise to always remember the Savior and His great atoning sacrifice. Through the sacrament, we

renew our covenants and express our willingness to keep His commandments.

The Lord told the Nephites:

“And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

“. . . And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock” (3 Nephi 18:11–12).

With the help of the sacrament, we can always remember Him and maintain an eternal perspective. ■

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* (1936), 128.
2. Robert Robinson, “Come, Thou Fount,” in *Gospel Tent Songs* (1905), no. 104; two verses of this hymn appeared in *Hymns: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1948), no. 70.
3. Robinson, “Come, Thou Fount,” no. 104.



Unshaken

*As we turned to the Lord in the aftermath of the earthquake,
we were reminded of the importance of always remembering Him.*

By Reid Tateoka

Former mission president of the Japan Sendai Mission

Friday, March 11, 2011, 2:46 p.m.; Kōriyama, Japan; Kōriyama chapel, second floor.

Fifteen missionaries in the middle of leadership training begin to practice teaching about Joseph Smith. As the message of hope and peace fills the room, the windows begin to rattle. The noise intensifies. What began as vibrations escalates to booming.

The building jerks side to side, and the movement increases in speed and magnitude until it becomes one continuous jolting motion. Standing and walking are nearly impossible. Some missionaries try to take cover under the tables—until the tables are thrown across the

room. The building, the city, even the whole province reel in commotion as if the earth will burst open. One thought prevails in my mind: “Get the missionaries out of here!”

Our Miraculous Evacuation

As mission president of the Japan Sendai Mission, I had been teaching the missionaries and members for months to “turn to the Lord” (Mosiah 7:33). Now, as I turned to Him for divine guidance, inspiration came quickly: “Open the door—create an escape route.” I knew that I must open the door before the ceiling collapsed, trapping us inside. So I rushed to the door and opened it. “Get out of here!” I shouted.



The March 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami devastated numerous cities in northern Japan (such as Miyako City, above), killing thousands of people and displacing hundreds of thousands of others.

The missionaries staggered along the shifting, rocking, heaving floor toward the open door; then they headed down the stairwell and out of the church. Once outside, we felt safer, although we were not yet safe from the elements. The weather had turned bitter cold, and snow pelted our faces.

Across from the church, headstones in a Buddhist cemetery toppled over; the wall of the cemetery had turned to rubble. A large fissure zigzagged up all 12 stories of an apartment building behind the church. Large chunks of concrete facade had crumbled off the walls of an adjacent elementary school. Windows had blown out, and broken glass littered the ground. On the opposite side of the road, a blue tile roof lay in pieces. I gathered the 15 missionaries in the parking lot of the church, and we gave our Heavenly Father thanks for our protection and asked for His continued help.

Our Thanksgiving Prayers

Panic set in throughout the city. Afraid that they would go without food, people began buying everything in

sight. Bread and milk sold out immediately, and within a few hours no bread could be found in the city. Lines miles long formed at the gas stations.

In contrast to the panic of the people on the streets, the missionaries were remarkably calm. We offered prayers of thanksgiving, and we felt a calm assurance that all would be well.

We could not leave the city—roads were damaged and freeways were closed, and no trains or buses were running. People who had waited hours in long lines to purchase gasoline were turned away. Government inspectors systematically entered each residence, condemning some and approving others for occupancy. So we stayed overnight at evacuation centers with numerous others who, like us, could not return to their homes.

Discipleship amid Distress

The next day, Saturday, we began as usual with scripture study and prayer. That day we especially needed our Heavenly Father's help. After scripture study, I

organized the missionaries into groups. One group went to the church to help clean up and then worked with the branch president to repair members' homes. One group visited the city inspectors to find out whether the missionary apartments were safe to enter. Another group checked to see if trains and buses were running. Several others stood in lines to obtain water while others searched for food. One companionship received a special assignment: find bread for the sacrament on Sunday. I worked throughout the day trying to contact all the missionaries in the mission.

That day we felt our Heavenly Father's guidance in everything we did. The missionaries who stood in the line for water met two men with whom they shared the gospel. The missionaries shared their testimonies of God's love and brought the two men to our testimony meeting in the evening and to church the next day.

The sisters who sought food for us soon learned that God was guiding their footsteps. Unable to find anything

in the stores, they found food in places they usually would not consider, such as down deserted alleys and in small, one-room shops. We had been given our "daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

At the end of the day we reported back to our Heavenly Father. We had not lost our focus. We were still "disciple[s] of Jesus Christ," who were "called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life" (3 Nephi 5:13).

The Father's Strength, Power, and Peace

That evening we felt a greater need for the strength and power of our Heavenly Father. We needed His Spirit to be with us. So we had a testimony meeting at the chapel. The missionaries thanked the Lord for giving us our daily bread, and they recognized that we had been led, guided, directed, and protected. They knew that many others were not so fortunate and would not see another sunrise. We truly had been "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we [had been] perplexed, but not in despair; . . . cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8–9).

All the missionaries testified of the peace they felt. They testified that God had protected them and calmed their souls. They had faced the possibility of death but did not fear. They did not have the water, food, or heat needed to sustain them long-term, yet they were nourished with living water; they were fed by the word of God; they were warmed by the Spirit. Within our little band of missionaries, not one feared. Each missionary felt God's strengthening power that night and felt closer to God than ever before.

As that day ended, we were grateful to be alive. We thanked the Lord for the help He had extended to us in very literal ways. We made assignments for our worship service the next day and left the chapel to join the dozens of other temporarily homeless people in the evacuation center.



THE PURPOSE OF TRIALS

"Our Heavenly Father, who gives us so much to delight in, also knows that we learn and grow and become stronger as we face and survive the trials through which we must pass. . . . Such difficulties allow us to change for the better, to rebuild our lives in the way our Heavenly Father teaches us, and to become something different from what we were—better than we were, more understanding than we were, more empathetic than we were, with stronger testimonies than we had before."

President Thomas S. Monson, "I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 87.



As if preserving our lives had not been enough, our Heavenly Father made sure that we would be able to “always remember” His Son.

The Sacrament Bread

But two elders were especially solemn. They had been asked to get the bread for the sacrament the next day and had not accomplished their assignment.

As we reached the evacuation center Saturday evening, the city employees welcomed us back. They apologized that they had given us little food (20 crackers) to eat the day before but then beamed as they handed us the next day’s rations: a bottle of water and eight slices of bread.

My elders looked at me as if to say, “How could the Lord bless us any more?”

God, who knows the fall of a sparrow, had reached out again, as if preserving our lives had not been enough. Our Heavenly Father made sure that we would be able to “always remember” His Son (D&C 20:77). We were closer to our Savior than we had ever been in our lives.

The missionaries gave a special prayer that night. They dropped to their knees to thank our Heavenly Father for another miracle in a series of special miracles. They understood the priority that God has placed on our covenant to always remember Jesus Christ, and they were grateful for the mercy and kindness of a loving God who lets us partake of the sacrament each week.

These missionaries now testified, with greater conviction than ever before, that God wants us to always remember His Son, Jesus Christ. ■

The 2011 Tōhoku earthquake took place 70 kilometers (about 45 miles) off the Oshika Peninsula and registered at a 9.0 magnitude, one of the five most powerful earthquakes measured since modern record keeping began in 1900.¹ All of the Sendai missionaries were accounted for within days of the earthquake.

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. “Managing Post-Disaster Debris: The Japan Experience” (United Nations Environment Programme, June 2012), 5, unep.org/disastersandconflicts.



**By Elder
Bradley D. Foster**
Of the Seventy

I testify that the Savior will abide with you in your darkest hour. He is there, and He has declared, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Trials, Tribulations, and **TRUST** in the **LORD**

In this world of “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11), life is not fair. When I think of Preslee Jo Sullenger and her parents, I am reminded that bad, sad, and difficult things can and will happen even to good people.

Preslee was a bright and energetic 18-month-old. She had blond hair that usually had a mind of its own, piercing blue eyes, and a love of all things little girl—especially necklaces. Her turn on earth was short, but her impact was immeasurable.

On a warm night in July, little Preslee was with relatives while her parents, Pat and Ashley, went on a date. A few hours later, her parents received a phone call telling them that Preslee had fallen into a canal and that they needed to go straight to the hospital.

After falling into the canal, Preslee had floated about a mile and a half downstream, where she bumped into the leg of Jeff Call, a farmer who was working in the canal. He was about ready to leave but had decided he needed to put one last board in the ditch where he was irrigating. Jeff immediately began CPR, while his brother Mike called for medical help.

Many months before the accident, Preslee’s mother had created a blog on which she shared happy stories and photos as Preslee grew and experienced life. After the accident, the blog became a way for the family to update concerned family and friends on Preslee’s fight for life in the hospital.



Pat and Ashley Sullenger, pictured at right at the graveside service of their daughter, Preslee, say she “taught us about the miracles around us each and every day.”





Through social media, word of Preslee's accident spread quickly, and within a few days, the blog had tallied more than 300,000 views. People were drawn to her story, offering prayers and kind words of support. With permission, I share Ashley's update six days after the accident.

"Preslee has shown us today that perhaps there is a different plan for her than we [had] originally thought. Throughout the events of today and yesterday, Preslee's condition has turned down a different path, and her little spirit is torn between two worlds. . . . From one day to the next, it's as if her valiant little spirit is just staying . . . long enough for us to realize that this is not the end. Little Preslee has been a strong fighter, but we don't know if she will be fighting much longer."

The next day Preslee returned to her Heavenly Father. Ashley wrote, "We have . . . experienced a range of emotions from tragic horror to hope to complete humility and now to an assurance that God is the true giver and taker of life."

A massive audience followed as Pat and Ashley said good-bye to their precious child and witnessed how they had relied on their knowledge of eternal families and their faith in Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the plan of salvation to help them through this extreme trial.

"She was an angel sent here for us—an angel that has taught us about the miracles around us each and every day," Ashley wrote. "When we think of what she accomplished in one week in the hospital, we begin to cry. She rebuilt

testimonies, she introduced people to the gospel, she even saved a complete stranger's marriage. We, like many of you, wonder why things had to turn out this way [what] with the hundreds and thousands of prayers offered up in her behalf and the complete faith we had for her to receive a miracle."

"I Know That My Redeemer Liveth"

When I think of the courageous and faithful way that Pat and Ashley Sullenger responded to the loss of their precious Preslee, I am reminded of the story of Job in the Old Testament. Among his many trials, Job lost all of his children. News of their deaths came from a messenger, who reported:

"Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

"And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead" (Job 1:18–19).

Job, an upright, God-fearing man who disdained evil, was so sorrowful that he fell to the earth upon hearing the news. Nevertheless, he accepted God's will. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22).

But Job, like all of us, wondered why he had to face the trials that confronted him (see Job 10:15). And like us, at times he felt that perhaps God had forgotten him or was not listening to him (see Job 19:6–8; 23:3–4).

When sorrow, misfortune, or tragedy strike, how will we respond? If we trust in the Lord and if our testimony of the Savior's gospel and Resurrection is strong, we will be able to respond with the faith of Pat and Ashley Sullenger, who, with Job, can declare: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

Heavenly Father placed us in this lone and dreary world to teach us what we need to learn so that we may become like Him. Our lives are changed daily by the incorrect decisions of others, by our own poor judgment, by the laws of nature, and by unforeseen circumstances in a world that was never designed to be fair.

I have learned much from a book titled *Why Did This Happen to Me?* by Ray Pritchard. He says: "*Sometimes we*

will face things for which there is no earthly explanation. In those moments we need to erect a sign that reads, ‘Quiet: God at Work.’ Meanwhile, hold on, child of God. Keep believing. Don’t quit. Don’t give up. Let God do His work in you. The greatest tragedy is to miss what God wants to teach us through our troubles.”¹

We do not know how long we will live on earth or what Heavenly Father has in store for us. We must trust in Him, make the most of each moment, and use our talents and gifts to improve our lives and to serve others.

President Thomas S. Monson has declared:

“Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments. . . .

“My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.”²

The Lord Is in Charge

Someday, “from the vantage point of the future, we shall be satisfied with many of the happenings of this life that are so difficult for us to comprehend,” said President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985). He added: “We knew before we were born that we were coming to the earth for bodies and experience and that . . . after a period of life we would die. We accepted all these eventualities with a glad heart, eager to accept both the favorable and unfavorable. We eagerly accepted the chance to come earthward even though it might be for only a day or a year.”³

It has been almost four years since the Sullengers’ life was changed forever. During that time they have continued to share their highs and lows as they’ve tried to make sense of their loss and celebrate the good things that have blessed their lives since Preslee’s accident. Those blessings include two-year-old Ledger and baby twins, Cannon and Cruz.

While she was in the hospital, Preslee received a

blessing in which she was told that countless people would be drawn to her story and that she would continue to influence others for good. When Ashley heard this, she thought her daughter would recover. “How else could she continue to influence others?” she asked.

Ashley had no idea that her blog, which has had nearly seven million page views, would continue to grow. An author of one of the many comments on her blog stated:

“[Preslee] has taught families to draw closer, love harder, look at each other a bit differently, and appreciate what they have. She has taught people that what they make big deals of in their lives may not be that big after all. Your family’s faith and perseverance [have] taught people to step back and reevaluate their own lives, and maybe live a bit differently, and with more purpose.”

Even on the darkest days, Ashley and Pat still rely on the Lord and testify of the healing power of His Spirit. They have experienced a measure of the peace that only He can bring.

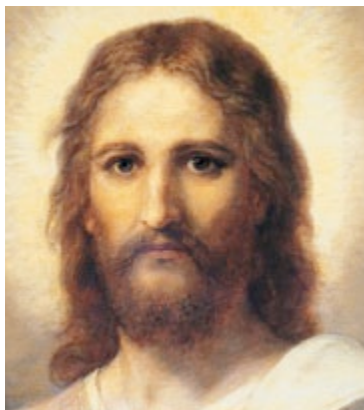
May we all face our challenges with faith, endurance, and trust in our Heavenly Father and in His plan for each of us. Remember, it’s not what happens to us that matters; it’s how we handle what happens that makes all the difference.⁴ “When the universe itself seems shattered and the shards of our world lie littered about us in pieces,”⁵ the Savior’s power and assurance can still make it possible for us to experience joy and peace.

I testify that the Savior will abide with you in your darkest hour. He is there, and He has declared, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). ■

The Atonement of Jesus Christ can heal afflictions. See November 2013 Ensign: Thomas S. Monson, p. 85; Linda S. Reeves, p. 118.

NOTES

1. Ray Pritchard, *Why Did This Happen to Me?* (2003), 57; emphasis in original.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 92.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 20.
4. See Pritchard, *Why Did This Happen to Me?* 57.
5. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Sunday Will Come,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 30.





THE MUSTARD SEED

Learn more about the little seed with a big reputation.



THE MUSTARD PLANT

Plant name: black mustard
(*Sinapis nigra* or *Brassica nigra*)

Plant type: annual, dicotyledon

Average size of seed: 1–2 millimeters (about .05 inch)

Average size of plant: 1–2 meters (about 3–6 feet) high, though under certain conditions it can sometimes grow to be 3–5 meters (about 10–15 feet) high or more, and just as wide

THE RESTORED CHURCH IS BRANCHING FORTH

"This figure [the mustard seed] is given to represent the Church as it shall come forth in the last days. . . .

"Let us take the Book of Mormon . . . ; let us behold it coming forth out of the ground, which is indeed accounted the least of all seeds, but behold it branching forth, yea, even towering with lofty branches and God-like majesty, until it, like the mustard seed, becomes the greatest of all herbs. And it is truth, . . . and God is sending down His powers, gifts, and angels to lodge in the branches thereof."

The Prophet Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 301.



WHAT WE CAN LEARN

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

"Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Matthew 13:31–32

MUSTARD SEEDS:

- **Are small.** The kingdom of heaven (Christ's Church) arose from humble beginnings, both in Jesus's day and in the latter days.
- **Can spread widely and quickly.** As we share the gospel with others and the Holy Ghost testifies to them that it is true, the Church of Jesus Christ can spread until it accomplishes its destiny of filling the earth.
- **Can grow to be unusually large.** When Christ says that the mustard seed will become a tree, He is describing something unique that can happen with a mustard plant under certain conditions—it can grow into a large, tree-like bush. So it is with the Church. From obscure beginnings and with the unique blessings, authority, and power of God, the Church has been restored and will fulfill its purpose of preparing the world for the Second Coming of the Savior.



FACTS ABOUT MUSTARD SEEDS

- In Jesus's day, it was common for people to say something was like a mustard seed in order to suggest that it was very, very small.
- The mustard plant is quite common in the Near East and is often considered to be a weed because it can spread so widely and quickly with its tiny seeds.
- Mustard plants don't grow into what we normally think of as trees, with woody trunks, bark, and big branches, though when conditions are right, they can become quite large.
- Seeds were often ground up to make powder, paste, or oil for use in medicines (poultices and plasters) or foods (pickling spice, cooking oil, and condiments).
- The name *mustard*, as well as the use of mustard as a condiment, came from the Romans, who added must (freshly pressed grape juice) to the spicy-hot powder from the ground-up seeds.

Ministering THAT MATTERS

Ministering that matters includes love and compassion, a listening ear, prayers and priesthood blessings, temporal and spiritual support, and teaching by the Spirit.

The Savior Jesus Christ came to earth to minister to others, spending His days in their service and giving His life for their salvation (see Matthew 20:27–28). As disciples of the Good Shepherd, we look to Him as our example and we follow His command: “The works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do” (3 Nephi 27:21).

Ministering means doing “the work of the Lord on the earth” and helping others to “become true followers of Jesus Christ.”¹ That work, President Thomas S. Monson has said, includes reaching out to “the aged, the widowed, the sick, those with disabilities, the less active, and those who are not keeping the commandments.”

As “we extend to them the hand that helps and the heart that knows compassion,” he added, “we will bring joy into their hearts, and we will experience the rich satisfaction that comes to us when we help another along the pathway to eternal life.”²

Seek the One

In His parable of the lost sheep, Jesus taught an essential principle of effective ministering: leaving “the ninety and nine in the wilderness” and seeking the one (see Matthew

KEYS TO MINISTERING

- Emulate the Savior.
- Reach out to the one.
- Seek inspiration.
- Nurture.
- Be faithful in your ministry.



18:12; Luke 15:4). Whether a person is lost or has gone astray, whether a family needs a spiritual or temporal blessing, or whether members of a ward or stake seek counsel or strengthening, the principle of seeking the one applies.

During a visit to England in 2011, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said when members of the Quorum of the Twelve minister, they seek individuals, following the “one by one” principle found in the Book of Mormon (see 3 Nephi 11:15; 17:21) and helping “to lift, to bless, to do something to help an individual or a family.”

Elder Bednar added: “While I’m in England, the Lord sent me to find a *one*, and along the way I get to participate in a bunch of meetings, and maybe some good will be done. But the keys of the kingdom were sent here to find a *one*. You don’t talk to a congregation; you talk to assembled *ones*.”³

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said true disciples of Jesus Christ are always concerned with the one. “We are to be our brother’s keeper. We cannot neglect this commission given by our Savior. We must be concerned for the one.”⁴



Act on Inspiration

In an address to Relief Society sisters in September 2013, President Monson told the story of a woman named Tiffany, an overwhelmed mother of four children. Stressed and worried after learning that a loved one had been diagnosed with cancer, Tiffany slipped into depression. She also lost her appetite. When scripture reading and prayer brought no peace, she began to feel that her Heavenly Father had abandoned her.

At that juncture, the only thing that sounded good to her was homemade bread. The next day, an “unmistakable feeling” prompted a woman named Sherrie to deliver an extra loaf of bread she had made to Tiffany, though doing so meant driving 30 minutes to the other side of town.

“And so it happened that the Lord sent a virtual stranger across town to deliver not just the desired homemade bread but also a clear message of love to Tiffany,” President Monson said. “What happened to her cannot be explained in any other way. She had an urgent need to feel that she wasn’t alone—that God was aware of her and had not abandoned her. That bread—the very thing she wanted—was delivered to her by someone she barely knew, someone who had no knowledge of her need but who listened to the prompting of the Spirit and followed that prompting.”⁵



WE ARE THE LORD’S HANDS

“We are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness. . . . We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 86.

When we minister, we should seek and heed promptings from the Spirit. As President Monson has said, “If we are observant and aware, and if we act on the promptings which come to us, we can accomplish much good.”⁶

Nurture

In describing the nurturing that new members of the Church received in his day, Moroni wrote, “Their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith” (Moroni 6:4; see also Mosiah 23:18).

Likewise, Heavenly Father’s children in our day—both young and old—need nurturing. Latter-day Saints have covenanted to provide that care by bearing one another’s burdens, by mourning and comforting others, and by standing as witnesses of God (see Mosiah 18:8–9). Ministering that matters includes love and compassion, a listening ear, prayers and priesthood blessings, temporal and spiritual support, and teaching by the Spirit.

“Often small acts of service are all that is required to lift and bless another: a question concerning a person’s family, quick words of encouragement, a sincere compliment, a small note of thanks, a brief telephone call,” said President Monson.⁷

One priesthood holder was surprised to receive a thank-you note from a new ward member for what he considered an insignificant query. He did not know that the new ward member’s divorced daughter was having difficulty adjusting to the new ward and community, but one Sunday he asked the daughter about her children and her college studies. Then he offered a smile and a word of encouragement.

In her thank-you note, the mother wrote:



“I want to thank you for talking to my daughter at church. It made her feel welcome and let her know that someone in this ward cares and is interested in her career and future. It was a very Christian thing to do. I appreciate your thoughtfulness.”

Be Faithful in Your Ministry

During the priesthood session of the October 2013 general conference, President Monson told the story of Dick Hammer, who met and married a Latter-day Saint woman. Willard Milne, assigned as the family’s home teacher, faithfully home taught the family for decades, working to bring Dick into the Church.

During their home teaching visits, Brother Milne and his companion always shared a gospel message and bore their testimonies. Finally, in his 90th year, Brother Hammer joined the Church. A year later he went to the temple, where he was endowed and received his sealing blessings.

Reflecting on his years of effort in working with this family, Brother Milne observed, “My heart fills with gratitude for the blessings the gospel has brought into their lives and for the privilege I have had to help in some way. I am a happy man.”⁸

If we are likewise faithful in our efforts to minister as home teachers, President Monson said, we will bless and be blessed.

“Our efforts in home teaching are ongoing,” he added. “The work will never be concluded until our Lord and Master says, ‘It is enough.’ There are lives to brighten. There are hearts to touch. There are souls to save. Ours is the sacred privilege to brighten, to touch, and to save those precious souls entrusted to our care. We should do so faithfully and with hearts filled with gladness.”⁹ ■

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Minister,” scriptures.lds.org; *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 3.2.3.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Our Responsibility to Rescue,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2013, 5.
3. David A. Bednar, in text and video in “Reaching Many ‘Ones’ in England,” Prophets and Apostles, lds.org/prophets-and-apostles/unto-all-the-world/may-many-ones-taught-by-apostle-visiting-england.
4. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Concern for the One,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 18.
5. See Thomas S. Monson, “We Never Walk Alone,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 122–23.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 121.
7. Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” 120–21.
8. See Thomas S. Monson, “True Shepherds,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 67.
9. Thomas S. Monson, “True Shepherds,” 68.

HOME TEACHING: NO GREATER CALLING

One of the most effective ways we can minister to Heavenly Father’s children is through the home teaching program.

“As the priesthood of God we have a shepherding responsibility,” said President Thomas S. Monson. “The wisdom of the Lord has provided guidelines whereby we might be shepherds to the families of the Church, where we can serve, we can teach, and we can testify to them. Such is called home teaching.”¹

Handbook 2: Administering the Church offers counsel that will help home teachers magnify their ministry to the individuals and families within their stewardship.

That ministry includes:

- Remembering the names of those we visit and becoming well acquainted with them (see Moroni 6:4).
- Loving them without judging them (see John 13:34–35).
- Watching over them and strengthening them spiritually “one by one” (3 Nephi 11:15; 17:21).
- Becoming friends with them and visiting them often (see D&C 20:47).²



As we magnify our ministry as home teachers, we will also prayerfully prepare for our visits and seek guidance and inspiration from our Heavenly Father in assessing and meeting the needs of the families and individuals—including the children—we home teach.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) called home teaching an inspired program that “is the heart of caring, of loving, of reaching out to the one—both the active and the less active.” He added: “There is no greater Church calling than that of a home teacher. There is no greater Church service rendered to our Father in Heaven’s children than the service rendered by a humble, dedicated, committed home teacher.”³

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “True Shepherds,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 61.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 3.2.3.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Home Teachers of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 49, 50.

SERVING A STRANGER

By Yong Gil Park

As my departure from Korea came closer, I was worried. Who would take care of my aunt after I left?

My mom never accepted the gospel in her earthly journey, even though I had prayed for her and felt she would accept it someday. She was a strong woman who sacrificed throughout her life to support our family after the Korean War. On the one-year anniversary of my mom's death, my wife and I went to the Los Angeles California Temple to perform her baptism and confirmation. The strong Spirit in the room confirmed to me that my mom gladly accepted the gospel and the ordinances.

Just before my mom passed away, she asked me to take care of her younger sister, who was in a hospital in Korea. My family and I lived in California, USA, so unfortunately there seemed to be no way to fulfill my mom's compassionate last wish. Then my job unexpectedly relocated me to South Korea, and I had to be separated from my family for a year. Although I was concerned about living far from my family, I also anticipated visiting my aunt and my dad, who was in a Korean hospital suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

I asked Heavenly Father for divine help in living away from my family. As I thought about the time I would spend in Korea, I resolved to visit my

dad, my aunt, and the temple weekly as well as to pray for my family daily.

Once I was in Korea, the bishop of my new ward called me to be the Young Men president and the Gospel Doctrine teacher. My ward and the hospitals where my dad and aunt stayed were far from each other, and I had a very demanding job; but Heavenly Father blessed me with strength and stamina to magnify my callings and to keep my resolutions.

Soon after I started visiting my aunt, I discovered she rarely had any visitors. I decided to pick her up and have her stay with me on the weekends at my hotel, which had an extra room. However, I had a problem: should I take her with me to church on Sunday? I thought she would neither be interested in nor understand the meetings, and she would have to wait for hours after church for me to be done with meetings and other duties. But for some reason I felt I should take her.

That Sunday I took her with me, and, as expected, she had to wait for me afterward. After my meetings, I took her back to the hotel to eat. I noticed that she held a bag. I asked her about it, and she said a sister had given her some snacks.

Whenever I had duties after church,

this sister—who did not know my aunt—always offered my aunt snacks. One week during my Sunday School lesson, a familiar voice volunteered to read a scripture. I had never imagined my aunt would volunteer, but a kind sister sitting next to my aunt had prompted her to read for the class. Although my aunt was not good at socializing because of her time isolated in the hospital, all the members kindly greeted and chatted with her.

Every Sunday evening I would take her back to the hospital and promise to pick her up the next weekend, which always brought a happy smile to her face.

One day a friend of mine shared a concern that my aunt might have a hard time when my visits suddenly stopped when I left Korea. As my scheduled departure from Korea came closer, I felt mixed emotions—happy to be soon reunited with my family but distressed and sad about leaving my aunt alone.

Finally, I explained to my aunt that I would not be able to visit her as often. She paused a moment, obviously disappointed. Then she tried to compose herself and asked if I could visit her again in a year. I cried and desperately asked Heavenly Father to help this lady.

On my last Sunday in Korea, the



bishop asked if ward members could pick up my aunt on Sundays to bring her to church. He said that a number of members were willing to visit her on a regular basis—so many that they would have to organize and take turns. I could not believe his offer! This was the unexpected answer to my desperate prayers.

Since the members lived far away from my aunt's hospital, I offered to leave some money for them to cover the travel expenses, but the members refused to take my money. They told me they would take turns visiting once a month, but I found out later that they actually visited every week. One faithful sister picks up my aunt every Friday to attend institute and have lunch. She even took her to a beauty shop for a haircut. Another sister, a single mother of two teenage children,

volunteered to pick her up every Sunday morning. She cooks for my aunt, takes her for a walk, and listens to music with her. Most importantly, she tries to be a friend, and my aunt has finally opened up and comfortably chats with her and other members. Every Sunday evening the bishop picks up my aunt from a member's home after his long day of Church meetings and other duties to take her back to the hospital. Every Thursday he sends a kind email to me to report their heavenly service for my aunt.

I believe that my mom saw the actions of faithful Latter-day Saints serving her younger sister. And now I know, more clearly than ever, why we call our fellow Church members "brothers" and "sisters." ■

The author lives in California, USA.



WELCOME ALL

"Reach out to anyone who appears at the doors of your Church buildings. Welcome them with gratitude and with-

out prejudice. If people you do not know walk into one of your meetings, greet them warmly and invite them to sit with you. Please make the first move to help them feel welcome and loved, rather than waiting for them to come to you.

"After your initial welcome, consider ways you can continue to minister to them."

Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, "Ye Are No More Strangers," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 51.

NOW I KNOW THERE IS A GOD

Several years ago I served as a temple worker in the Santiago Chile Temple. During one evening shift I began to experience difficulty breathing, so I reluctantly requested to leave early.

As I walked to the subway station, I prayed that the train I needed would be there so I could get home soon. I thought my prayer was answered when I saw the train stopped at the platform. But as I approached, I saw the train staff rushing to help a passenger who was experiencing a possible heart attack. The words of my favorite hymn pierced my mind: “Have I done any good in the world today?”¹ I immediately felt impressed to help.

I hurried to where the staff took the young man to wait for the ambulance, and they allowed me to stay. I prayed to know what to do and pled with Heavenly Father to spare the young

man’s life. I didn’t want to leave him alone and scared, so I held his hand and tried to help him remain calm. I assured him that he had a long life ahead and that God had a purpose for him. I found out his family’s phone number, called them, and let them know their son was on his way to the hospital and was not alone.

When the paramedics arrived, I followed them to the ambulance. I felt I should stay with the young man until his family arrived. To my surprise, the paramedics decided I should come with them, so I held the young man’s hand all the way to the hospital.

Shortly after we arrived, they took him to the emergency room, and I went outside to watch for his family. When they came, his mother broke into tears, threw her arms around me, and said she was so glad there

are still good people on earth.

A week later I received a phone call from the young man. He told me the doctors said that remaining calm had been critical during that time before he reached the hospital.

Until that day, he did not believe in God. I was speechless when he exclaimed, “You saved my life, and I am forever grateful to you! Now I know there is a God.”

When I left the temple early that day, the Spirit led me to the right place at the right time. I feel grateful to our Heavenly Father for guiding me and giving me courage to do as the hymn says and not let the opportunity pass by, even if the only thing I could do was hold the hand of a stranger. ■
Carla Sofia Gavidia, Ontario, Canada

NOTE

1. “Have I Done Any Good?” *Hymns*, no. 223.

didn’t want to leave the young man alone and scared, so I held his hand and tried to help him remain calm.



I WAS THE NEEDY ONE

A few years ago a beat-up car appeared in our meetinghouse parking lot. It belonged to a single father of four children. He had come to ask for assistance. Our ward found them housing, and the father began bringing his family to church.

Sometimes the children's clothes were clean and sometimes they were dirty, but their hair was always messy. We never knew how snarled and tangled it would be. Each week the Primary president brought hair detangler and brushes. She and a teacher would work to fix the children's hair before Primary.

I was a counselor in the Primary presidency, and I admired the ability of these two sisters to embrace these unwashed children. I could not bring myself to touch their hair, and I wondered how these sisters did it. I eased my conscience by telling myself that I could help by watching the rest of the children while these women worked.

The youngest child in this family was three years old. She could not speak intelligibly, but she tried to make loud musical sounds when we sang. This irritated me.

Because three-year-old children have short attention spans, I began putting this little girl on my lap to help her listen. She would smile at me in appreciation, and I began to feel the joy and love that Heavenly Father had for this unwashed child—His child. Eventually, I found myself overlooking

the dirt and grabbing a brush to smooth out her tangled locks. I even decided that her attempt to sing was a joyful sound.

A few months later the children's father got up in testimony meeting and thanked us for helping his children.

The next week the family was gone.

I am grateful for the chance I had to serve those children. When they arrived, I felt they were too needy, but I found out that I was the one who needed them to help me change. ■

Diane Hatch, Arizona, USA

Sometimes the children's clothes were clean and sometimes they were dirty, but their hair was always messy.



MY BISHOP'S BIRTHDAY GIFT

On my birthday one Sunday morning, my husband and I were getting ready for church when the phone rang. I answered, and the bishop said, "I know today is your birthday, but could you meet with me in my office in 30 minutes? I would like to talk with you."

Curious, I hurried to church.

In his office, the bishop said to me, "Sister Cruz, I have a birthday present for you. The Lord is calling you to serve as Young Women president. Will you accept this calling?" I felt overwhelmed, but I accepted the calling. I was sustained and set apart that day.

When I returned home after church, I sat on my bed. The weight of responsibility hit me. I cried and felt inadequate for the work. What a responsibility to guide those young women! I was baptized when I was 22 and had never attended Young Women activities before. How could I be Young Women president?

I did the only thing I knew to do—I knelt and asked Heavenly Father for guidance in this new calling. At that moment I had an experience I will never forget. As I visualized each young woman, I understood that each was a daughter of Heavenly Father.

Each needed a president who loved her and could help her understand that God loved her. In my mind I saw the names of all the less-active young women (whom I had never met), and I understood that they were also daughters of Heavenly Father and needed my attention. I felt each one's potential.

The following months were not easy. I worked hard to get to know each young woman and to understand her needs. Together with the active young women, our presidency helped those who had been less active return to activity. I saw the hand of the Lord at work in many ways.

When I was released from my calling, I worried that perhaps I could have done more. Upon arriving home, I knelt and asked Heavenly Father if my service had been acceptable. I received a sweet feeling that He was pleased.

I thought back on that birthday when I could have turned down the calling because of all my other responsibilities. But I am the one who would have lost most by not accepting the calling. I would have lost the opportunity to learn humility, gain understanding, develop patience, and become an instrument in the Lord's hands. But mostly I would have failed the Lord in the confidence He placed in me, and I would have failed to learn that the opportunity to serve is a gift. ■

Mariana Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The bishop said to me, "Sister Cruz, I have a birthday present for you."



SHE NEEDS LOVE

I was not a very impressive teenager and spent little time serving others. During this time my mother invited me to come with her to visit my great-aunt at a nursing home.

My cousin and her daughter Stephanie accompanied us on this visit. Stephanie was seven or eight years old. As we walked into the nursing home, she waved at everyone she saw. They lit up as if she were handing out sunshine and rainbows. I, on the other hand, avoided eye contact.

When we entered the room that my great-aunt shared with another elderly woman, I did my best to disappear into the background. Stephanie, however, jumped onto my aunt's bed and began to regale her with stories.

I noticed something about this room. On my aunt's side were signs of love and family. Pictures and crayon drawings hung on the wall, and flowers adorned a nightstand. The other side of the room was sterile and bare. There were no signs of any visitors; no cards or pictures hung on the wall.

My aunt's roommate sat alone in a wheelchair and did not acknowledge our presence. She was humming a tune and tapping the arms of her wheelchair, which made me uncomfortable.

Stephanie tugged on her mother's arm and asked, "Mommy, what's the matter with that lady?" Stephanie's mother leaned down and whispered, "She needs love." I was not prepared

for what happened next.

Without hesitation, Stephanie ran over and jumped into the woman's lap. She then began to tell her stories and ask all kinds of questions. The woman did not answer. Instead, tears ran down her face as she embraced Stephanie. For the next several minutes, Stephanie sat in her lap, stroking her hair and kissing her cheek.

I had never witnessed this type of unselfish love before, and I tried to hide my tears. Later, as we drove away from the nursing home, I marveled at how young Stephanie could be so selfless and so full of love and compassion for a complete stranger.

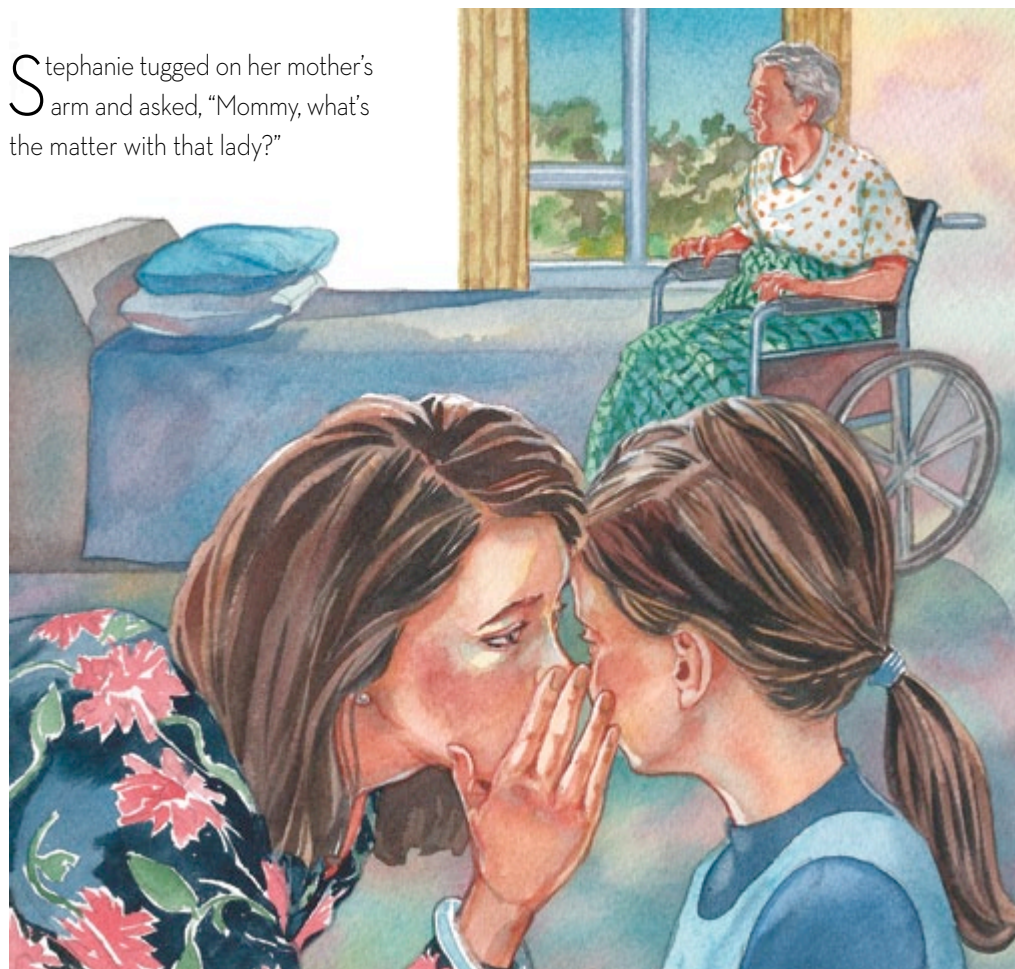
Eventually I turned my life around and served a full-time mission. While I served, Stephanie wrote me cute letters that included drawings just like the ones in my aunt's room in the nursing home.

Before I returned home, I received the devastating news that an illness had claimed Stephanie's life. I still weep that her light went out so soon, but I remain grateful for her example. She taught me what service truly is.

We do not ever have to wonder how or if we should serve. If our hearts are in the right place, then service will become a part of who we are, not just what we do. ■

Jay McFarland, Utah, USA

Stephanie tugged on her mother's arm and asked, "Mommy, what's the matter with that lady?"



WAITING IN THE LOBBY

By Lori Fuller
Church Magazines

One evening I took three of my younger siblings to the temple to do baptisms. As the temple worker checked our recommends, he discovered that my sister's was missing the bishop's signature. I started filling out a form to take to the temple recorder, who would call the bishop. Then the temple worker checked my brother's recommend and found that it had not been activated. I had the pen, so I took the form we were handed and began filling it out too.

I knew my brother and sister could not go in with errors on their recommends, but I felt responsible for them, and until I helped them take care of these errors, I could not go in either. I felt frustrated at being kept out of the temple. We left the baptistry and went upstairs to the temple entrance to explain our situation at the front desk. The temple recorder said he could fix the problem in just a few minutes, so the four of us sat down to wait in the lobby.



I felt disappointed when I was kept waiting in the lobby and out of the temple because of a few clerical errors.

As I sat there, my frustration changed to discouragement. We were being kept out for such simple errors, but they were all the difference between waiting in the lobby and entering the Lord's house. It had been a rough day, and I had counted on the temple to help me feel at peace. The mistakes weren't my fault, but as the wait dragged on, I felt ready to cry. I was trying to be good by coming to the temple and setting an example of temple attendance for my younger siblings. So why were we being kept out when I wanted so badly to be inside?

And then I realized something: if I felt discouraged being kept out of the temple for a few clerical errors, how disappointed would I feel to be kept out for my own errors—to not be worthy to enter the temple? As I considered this, I was suddenly calm. I felt that I had learned the lesson God wanted me to learn. I promised Him that I would always try to be worthy to go inside the temple. I promised that I would never be kept out of the Lord's house for my own errors; I never want my actions to confine me to just the lobby.

Later that night I had an appointment with my bishop to renew my temple recommend. Before I went, I checked for any errors in myself that might keep me out of the temple. When the bishop asked if I was worthy to enter the house of the Lord, I was so grateful that I could say yes. ■

The General Women's Meeting



**You're Invited to Attend
Saturday, March 29, 2014
6:00 p.m. (MDT)**

This March you can be a part of perhaps the largest gathering of women, young women, and girls in the world—the new semiannual general women's meeting. You're invited to accept the First Presidency's invitation to "gather in a spirit of worldwide sisterhood to enjoy messages from a member of the First Presidency and the general presidents of the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary organizations" (First Presidency letter, Feb. 13, 2014).

This meeting combines and replaces the general Relief Society and general Young Women meetings. And for the first time, girls eight years of age and older will be invited to attend. This history-making gathering will be broadcast on March 29 to meetinghouses worldwide and will be available online for those who can't come to a meetinghouse.

For more details on the event, visit lds.org/go/March14.
For ideas on sharing the event through social media, visit lds.org/go/social14E or scan the QR code.





In Church Magazines

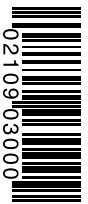
Ensign: “At age 25, I was divorced. My marriage had been a three-year nightmare of abuse, but these seven choices helped me reestablish hope and achieve healing.” See page 20.

New Era: Help your youth get excited for general conference and family home evening. See “Don’t Miss the Phone Call” (page 22) for an analogy they can relate to. And check out “FHE Object Lesson: Sodas, Slushies, and Spiritual Consequences” (page 12) for an engaging lesson that will freeze your whole family in their tracks on Monday night.

Friend: Throughout the year, the *Friend* is featuring interviews with adults in a variety of careers. Learn how their testimonies helped them in their chosen fields. Check out this month’s “When I Grow Up” on page 28 of the *Friend*.

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